STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No. 232

30p

RETURN OF THE ROBOT KID

We at "Starblazer" want to bring you the very best in Fantasy Fiction. To do that we need *your* help.

So that we can produce the kind of stories you want to read, please fill in the questionnaire on this page and send it to "Starblazer", D. C. Thomson & Co. Ltd., 185 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2HS.

If you don't want to cut your issue of "Starblazer", you can copy the questionnaire onto a sheet of paper.

And there's a chance to win a full-colour print of one of our new-style wraparound covers!

The senders of the ten letters which we judge to be the most informative will each receive one of the prints. We want to hear from you NOW!

Name ..... **Age** .....

Address .....

What kind of science fiction do you most enjoy? Please tick appropriate boxes. If you dislike any type of story, place a cross in the box.

SUPERHEROES	☐	☐	**FANTASY**
DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS	☐	☐	**SWORD AND SORCERY**
POST HOLOCAUST	☐	☐	**HORROR**
ADVENTURE	☐	☐	**STAR WARS**
HUMOUR	☐	☐	**DR. WHO**
			MYSTERY

Where do you normally buy your STARBLAZER? _____

_____

Which is your favourite STARBLAZER story? _____

_____

Which is your favourite character? _____

Which is your favourite science fiction movie? _____

_____

Have you any comments to make about STARBLAZER. . . good or bad? _____

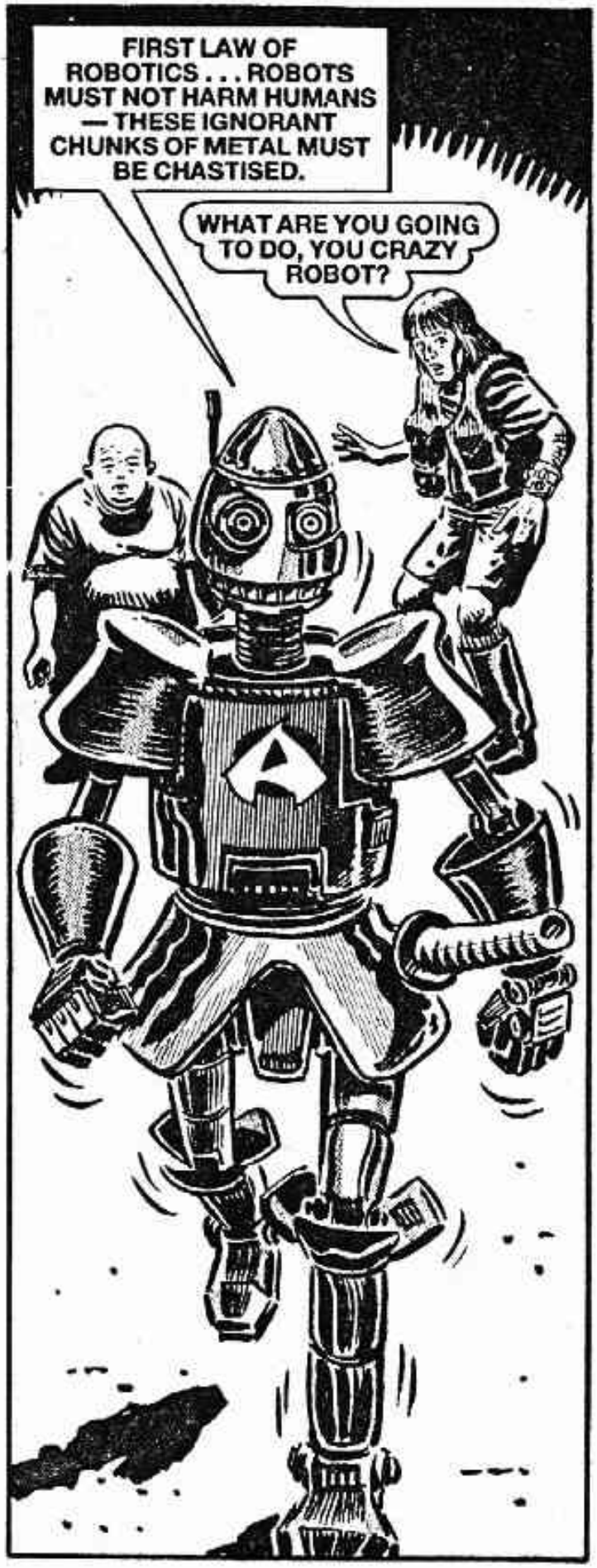
_____

Return of the Robot Kid
TWO TRAVELLERS WERE PASSING THROUGH ONE OF THE BUSIEST PLANETS IN THE KNOWN GALAXY, HA'ASHING. THE HUMAN WAS FRANK MANCO, AND HIS COMPANION WAS A MADLY MALFUNCTIONING ROBOT.
AND I STILL SAY YOU'RE CRAZY!
ON CONTRARY, MANCO-SAN. WARRIOR CHOOSES OWN NAME ONCE HE HAS PROVED HIMSELF IN BATTLE. SINCE R-IZ-ONA ALL HAVE KNOWN ME AS KID ROBOT.

. . . BUT THE TIME HAS COME TO . . .
HELLO? WHAT'S THIS?
YIEEEE!

. . . AND STAY OUT! YOU'RE
NOT WELCOME HERE!
DISHONOURABLE METAL THUG!
MAY YOUR JOINTS FREEZE AND ALL
THE OIL IN THE GALAXY RUN OUT!

K
KELSO ROBOTS
LET ME HELP YOU! WHAT HAPPENED?
MY VILLAGE OF LI'ANG IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLANET, PLAGUED BY BANDITS. I'VE TRIED TO APPEAL TO THOSE KILLDROIDS FOR HELP BEFORE, BUT THEY KNOW WE HAVE LITTLE MONEY AND JUST THROW ME OUT EACH TIME.


FIRST LAW OF ROBOTICS . . . ROBOTS MUST NOT HARM HUMANS — THESE IGNORANT CHUNKS OF METAL MUST BE CHASTISED.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, YOU CRAZY ROBOT?

WHAT WARRIOR MUST DO, MANCO-SAN! HAI-YAHH!
WITH A POWERFUL SPRING, THE ROBOT LAUNCHED ITSELF DIRECTLY AT THE KELSO ROBOTS' SHOP.
BUT THE ROBOT KID HAD MISJUDGED SLIGHTLY —
THOUGHTLESS PEPPER-POTS! YOU BRING DISGRACE TO KELSO NAME! THE WARRIOR CODE DEMAND YOU HELP MIDGET HUMAN AT ONCE!

THIS DROID NEVER SEEN MORE DISHONOURABLE SHOW! WILL REPORT ALL TO KELSO DIRECTORS THEMSELVES!
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE, YOU REBUILT PILE OF JUNK — BUT YOU'RE BEGINNING TO ANNOY ME!
BYOING!
PLOP
OH, NO!

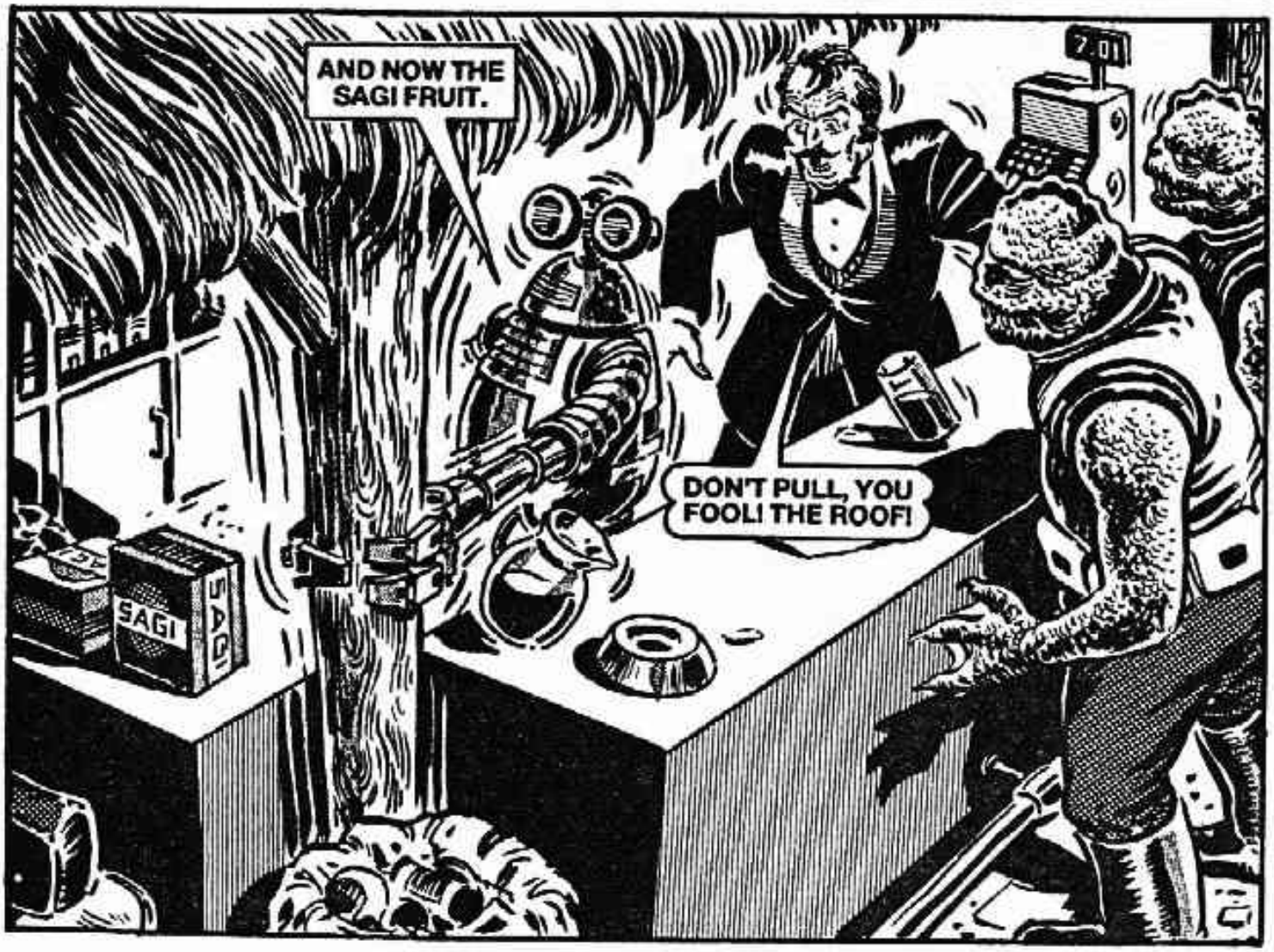
SOMETHING WE CAN DO FOR YOU?
NO — NO, THANKS ALL THE SAME! I THINK WE'LL JUST GO AND PICK UP OUR FRIEND — WHATEVER'S LEFT OF HIM.

THEY FOUND THE KID, UNHARMED BUT SLIGHTLY MORE DENTED, HALF A MILE AWAY.
YOU'RE STILL IN ONE PIECE!
OF COURSE, MANCO-SAN! BUT HAVE RESOLVED TO WIPE OUT DISHONOUR TO KELSO NAME BY PERSONALLY SAVING SMALL HUMAN'S VILLAGE. ROBOT KID HAS SPOKEN.

WE ARE TRULY SAVED! HOW CAN I EVER REPAY YOU?
SAY NO! KICK HIM OFF PLANET! OR THERE'LL BE NOTHING LEFT OF YOUR VILLAGE BY THE TIME HE'S SAVED IT.

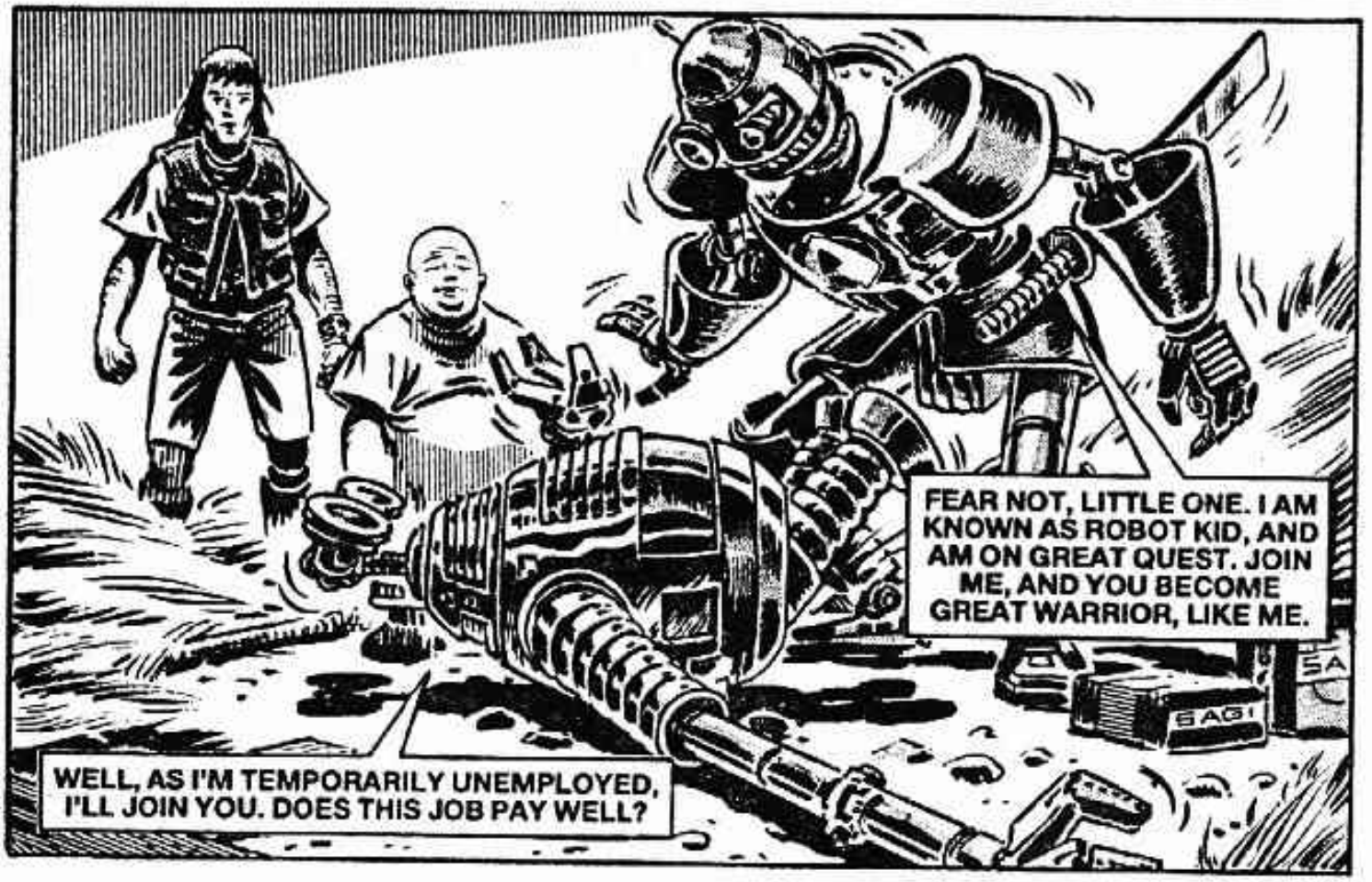
IGNORE HONOURABLE MECHANIC! BUT BEFORE WE SAVE VILLAGE, MUST GET DISCIPLES. ALL WARRIORS HAVE DISCIPLES.
MEANWHILE, AT AN EXOTIC FOOD SUPPLIERS, A SMALL SERVODROID WAS ABOUT TO SERVE TWO MEGARILLIAN SOLOCHROMES WITH AN ORDER OF SAGI-FRUIT.
MENU
7.0
. . . AND MAKE THEM SOFT ONES! I HATE THEM HALF-RIPE!
YES, SIR, RIGHT AWAY, SIR.

I'LL JUST REACH ACROSS . . .
HEY! WHAT'S THE IDEA?
WHANG!

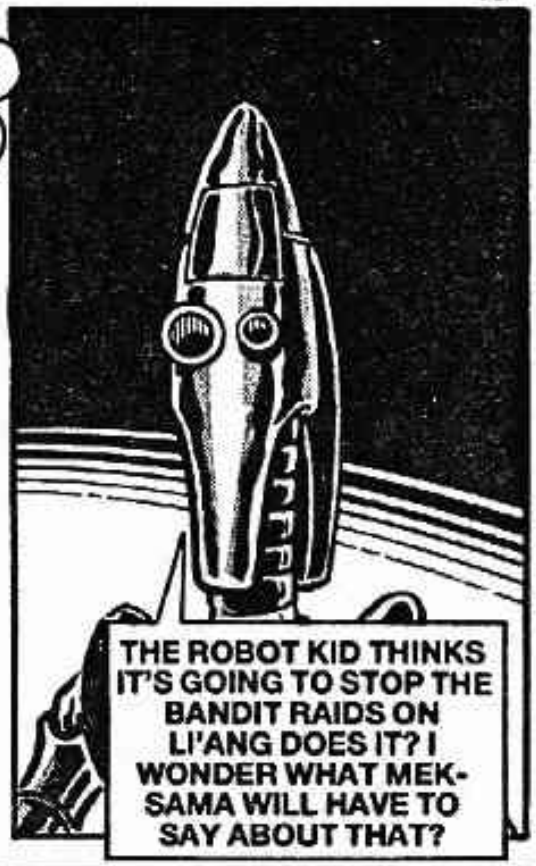

AND NOW THE SAGI FRUIT.
DON'T PULL, YOU FOOL! THE ROOF!
SAGI
SAGI

DEAF TO THE MANAGER'S CRIES, THE LITTLE DROID PULLED ANYWAY — AND LITERALLY BROUGHT THE HOUSE DOWN.
LET ME OUTTA HERE!
MENU
WHAT HAPPENED?
SAGE
YOU'RE THE MOST USELESS, INCOMPETENT PILE OF SHORT CIRCUITS I'VE EVER KNOWN! YOU'RE FIRED!

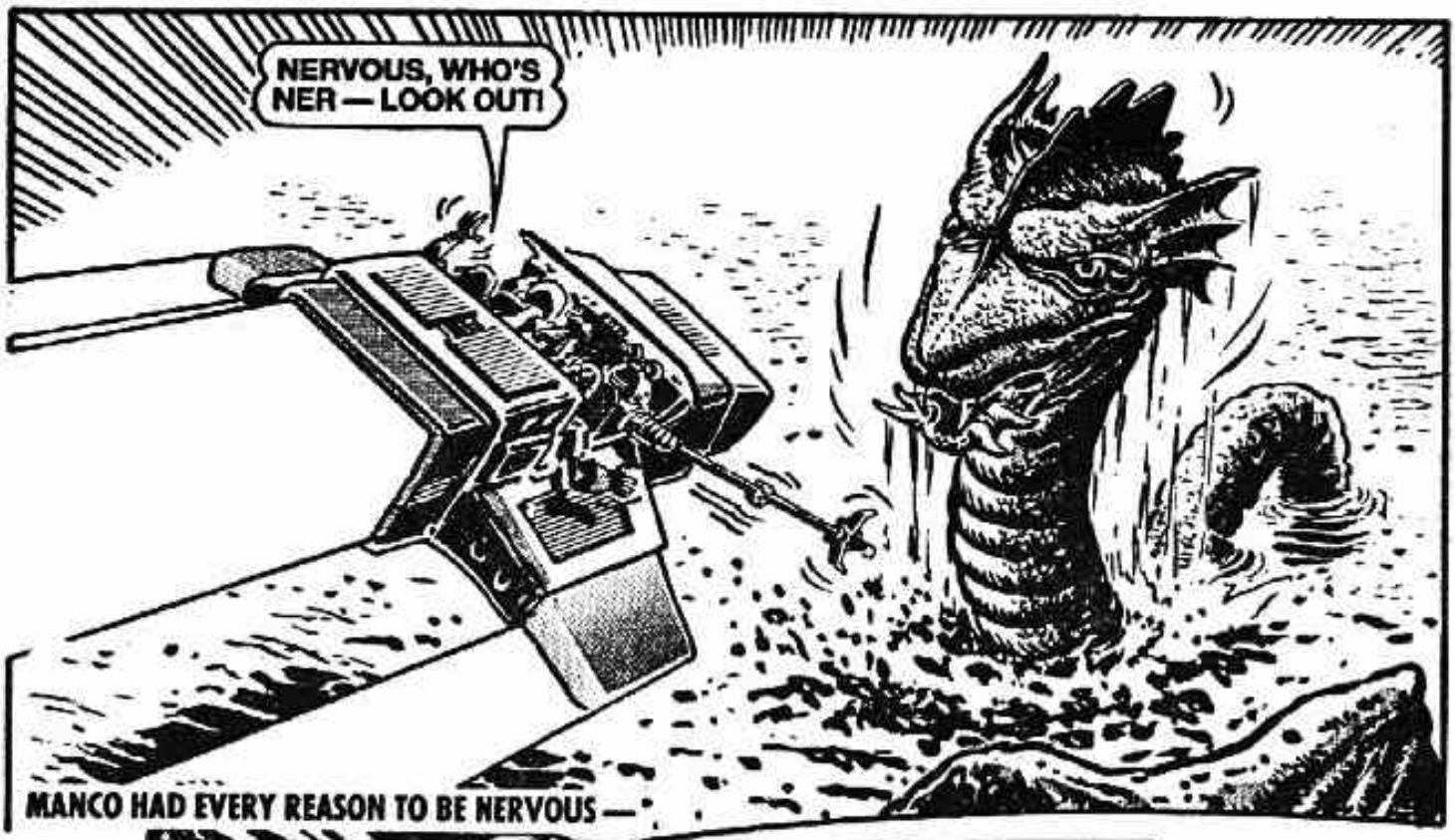
BEING THROWN ABOUT SEEMS TO BE A POPULAR PASTIME ON HAI'ASHING!
QUIET, MANCO-SAN. I THINK WE FIND FIRST OF MY DISCIPLES.


FEAR NOT, LITTLE ONE. I AM KNOWN AS ROBOT KID, AND AM ON GREAT QUEST. JOIN ME, AND YOU BECOME GREAT WARRIOR, LIKE ME.
WELL, AS I'M TEMPORARILY UNEMPLOYED, I'LL JOIN YOU. DOES THIS JOB PAY WELL?
SAGI

LITTLE ONE, FROM NOW ON YOU WILL BE KNOWN AS NINJI.
IT'S A PIG-STY UTILITY UNIT, NOT A WARRIOR! AND YOU'RE JUST A CLAPPED-OUT VIDEODROID! DON'T YOU EVER LISTEN?
AS THE FOUR MADE THEIR ERRATIC WAY DOWN THE STREET, THEY WERE UNAWARE OF THE HOSTILE EYES FOLLOWING THEM.


THE ROBOT KID THINKS IT'S GOING TO STOP THE BANDIT RAIDS ON LI'ANG DOES IT? I WONDER WHAT MEK-SAMA WILL HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THAT?

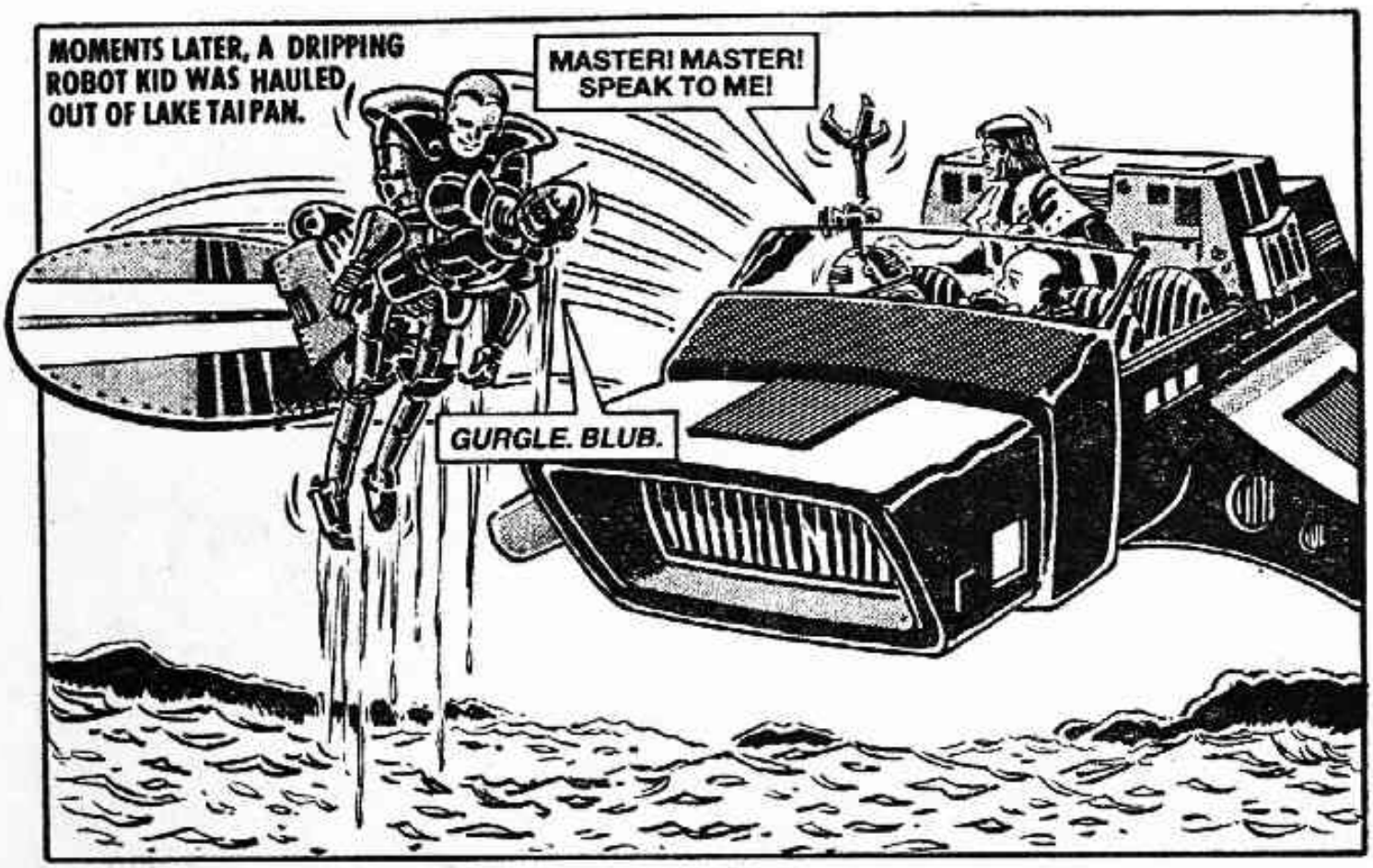
ALL FOUR REACHED DAIMYO'S STUBBY SKIMMER, AND THE MAN FLEW THEM QUICKLY TOWARDS HIS DISTANT VILLAGE.
DON'T THINK I'M CRITICISING, BUT ISN'T THERE A BETTER WAY TO LI'ANG? LIKE OVER DRY LAND?
I'M SORRY, FRANK MANCO, BUT THE FASTEST ROUTE IS OVER LAKE TAI-PAN. SHUT YOUR EYES IF IT MAKES YOU NERVOUS.

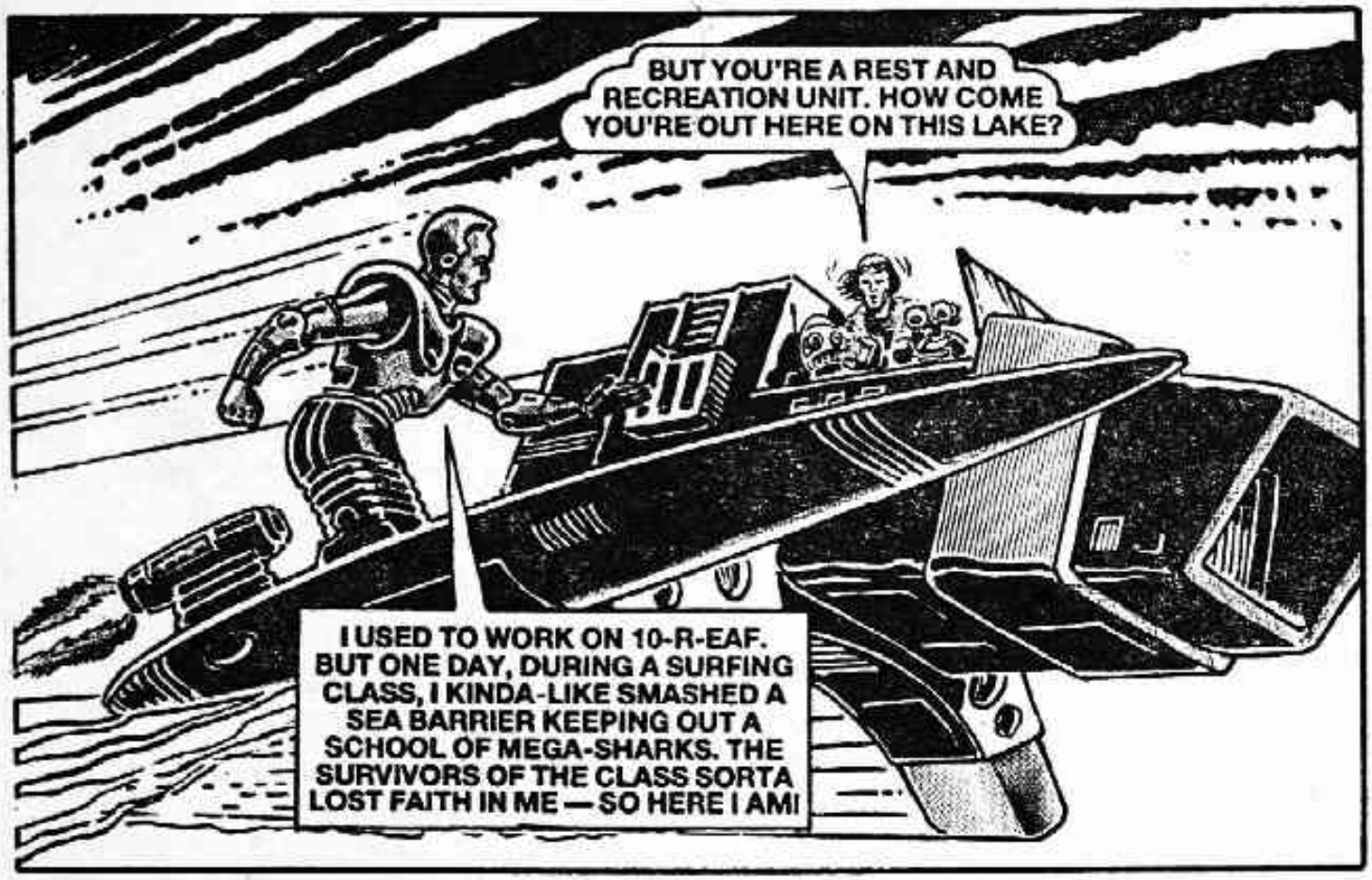


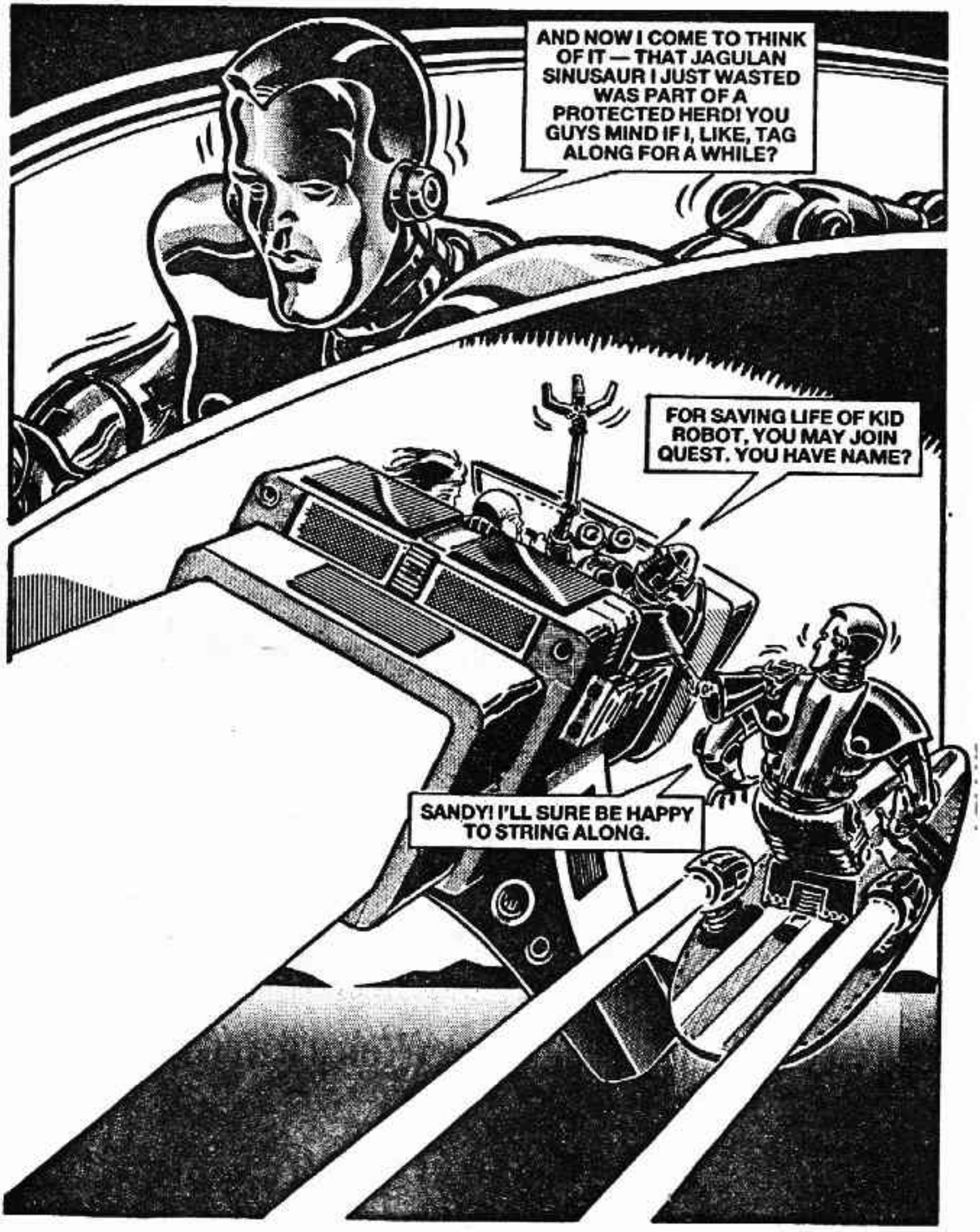
MANCO HAD EVERY REASON TO BE NERVOUS —

CAN THE MASTER SWIM?
YEAH — LIKE A BRICK! DROID OVERBOARD!
RESCUE CAME — IN A MOST UNUSUAL FORM.
DON'T SWEAT, POPS! I'M HERE TO CHEER — SO KEEP COOL! I GET AROUND . . . SURF'S UP!

HEY, DIG IT! SANDY AND GOLIATH!
EVEN BEFORE THE MONSTER HAD HIT THE WATER, THEIR RESCUER WAS PLUNGING DOWN AGAIN.
NOW I'LL JUST GO FIND THE MAN!
I DON'T BELIEVE I'M SEEING THIS!

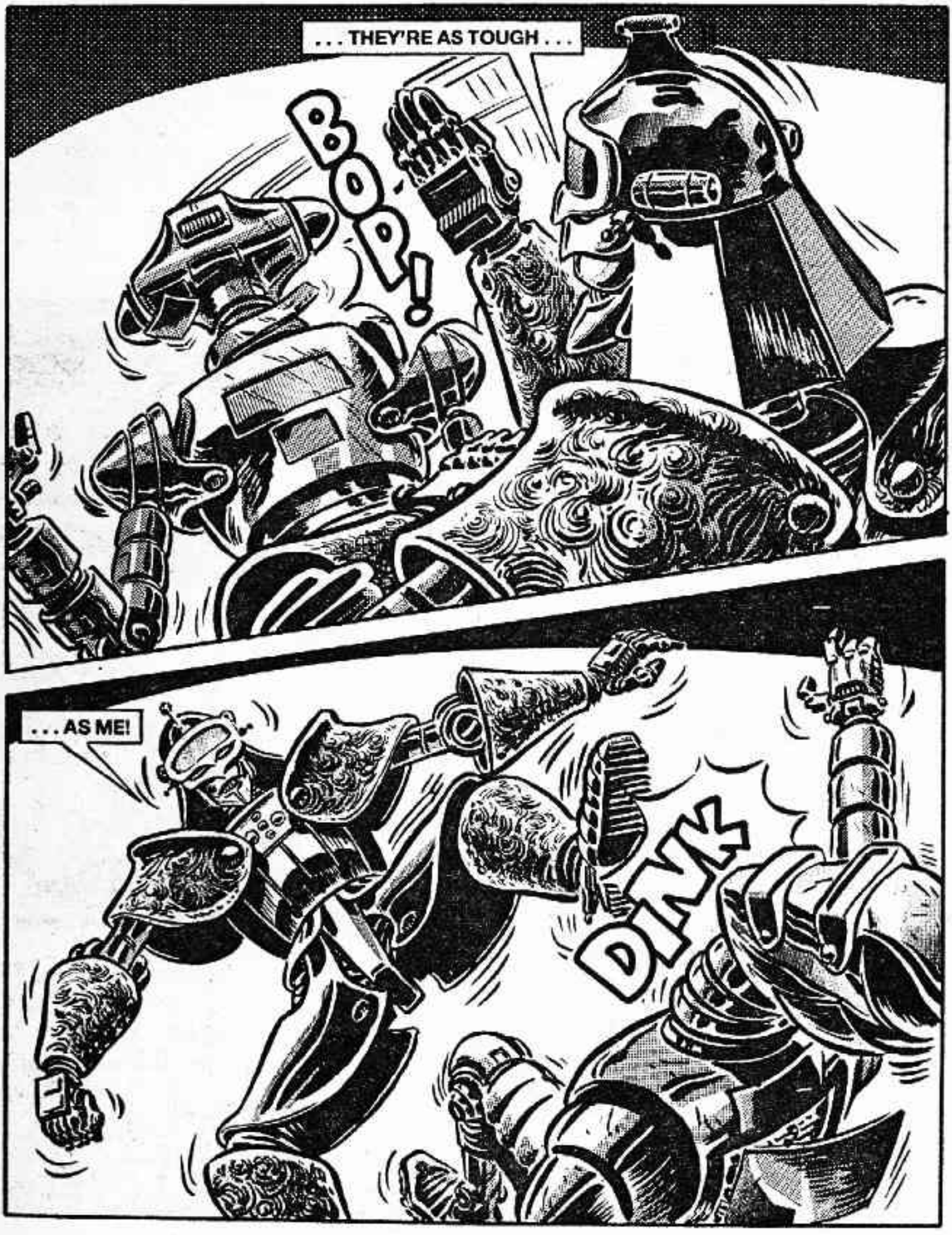

MOMENTS LATER, A DRIPPING ROBOT KID WAS HAULED OUT OF LAKE TAI PAN.
MASTER! MASTER! SPEAK TO ME!
GURGLE. BLUB.


BUT YOU'RE A REST AND RECREATION UNIT. HOW COME YOU'RE OUT HERE ON THIS LAKE?
I USED TO WORK ON 10-R-EAF. BUT ONE DAY, DURING A SURFING CLASS, I KINDA-LIKE SMASHED A SEA BARRIER KEEPING OUT A SCHOOL OF MEGA-SHARKS. THE SURVIVORS OF THE CLASS SORTA LOST FAITH IN ME — SO HERE I AM!

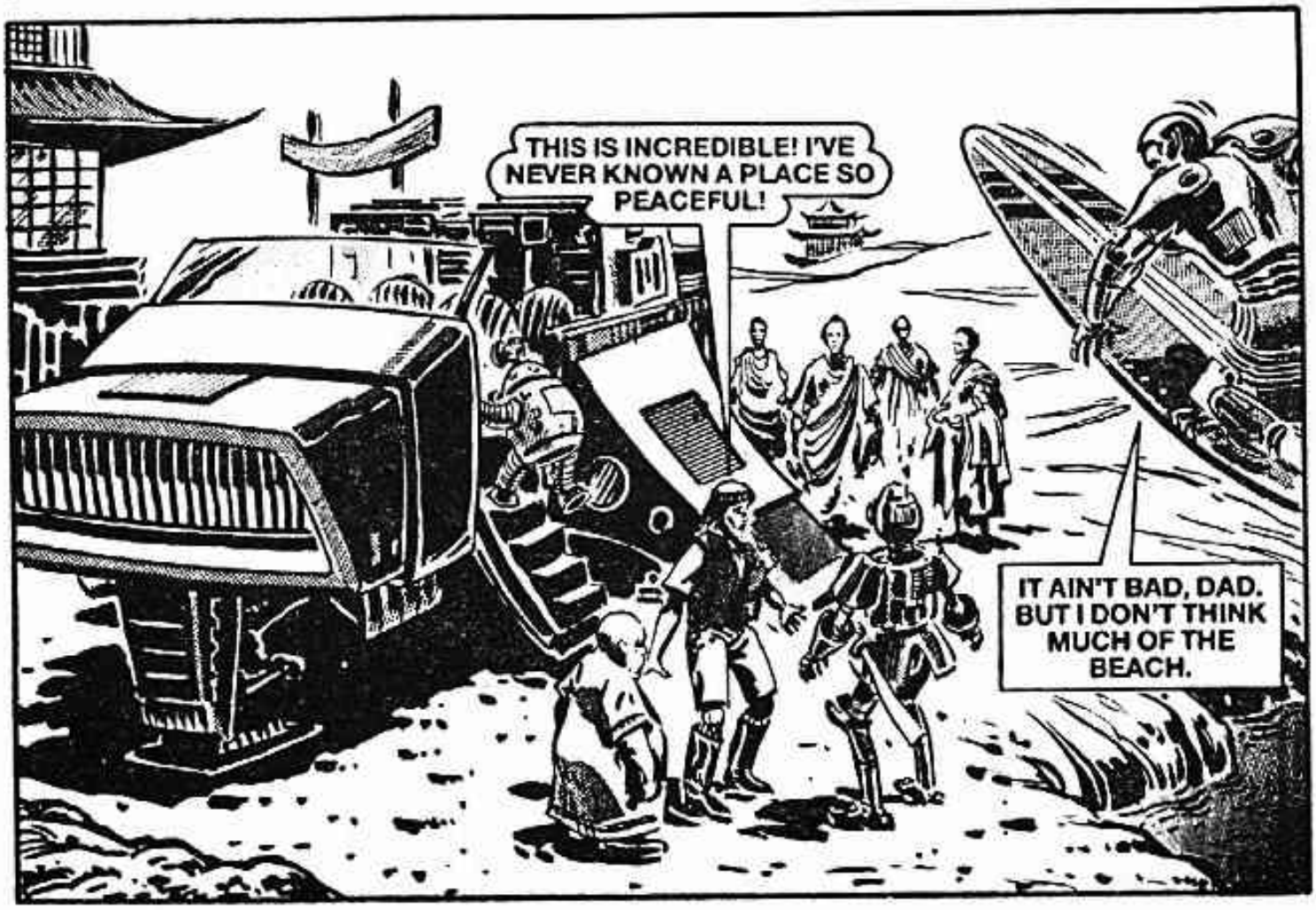

AND NOW I COME TO THINK OF IT — THAT JAGULAN SINUSAUR I JUST WASTED WAS PART OF A PROTECTED HERD! YOU GUYS MIND IF I, LIKE, TAG ALONG FOR A WHILE?
FOR SAVING LIFE OF KID ROBOT, YOU MAY JOIN QUEST. YOU HAVE NAME?
SANDY! I'LL SURE BE HAPPY TO STRING ALONG.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE CITY.
. . . THEY'RE ON THEIR WAY NOW, MEK-SAMA. I ESTIMATE THEY'LL ARRIVE AT LI'ANG JUST AFTER DAWN.
VERY WELL! I WILL ARRANGE A SUITABLE RECEPTION TOMORROW MORNING.
THE HUGE KILLDROID WAS MEK-SAMA — LEADER OF THE BANDITS TERRORISING THE VILLAGE OF LI'ANG.

MEK-SAMA STEPPED OUTSIDE.
DAIMYO HAS FOUND HIMSELF ALLIES!
RUMOUR HAS IT THIS ROBOT KID IS TOUGH. HAI!
THREE DROIDS RUSHED FORWARD ON THE COMMAND.
BUT I DOUBT IF . . .
KERUMP!

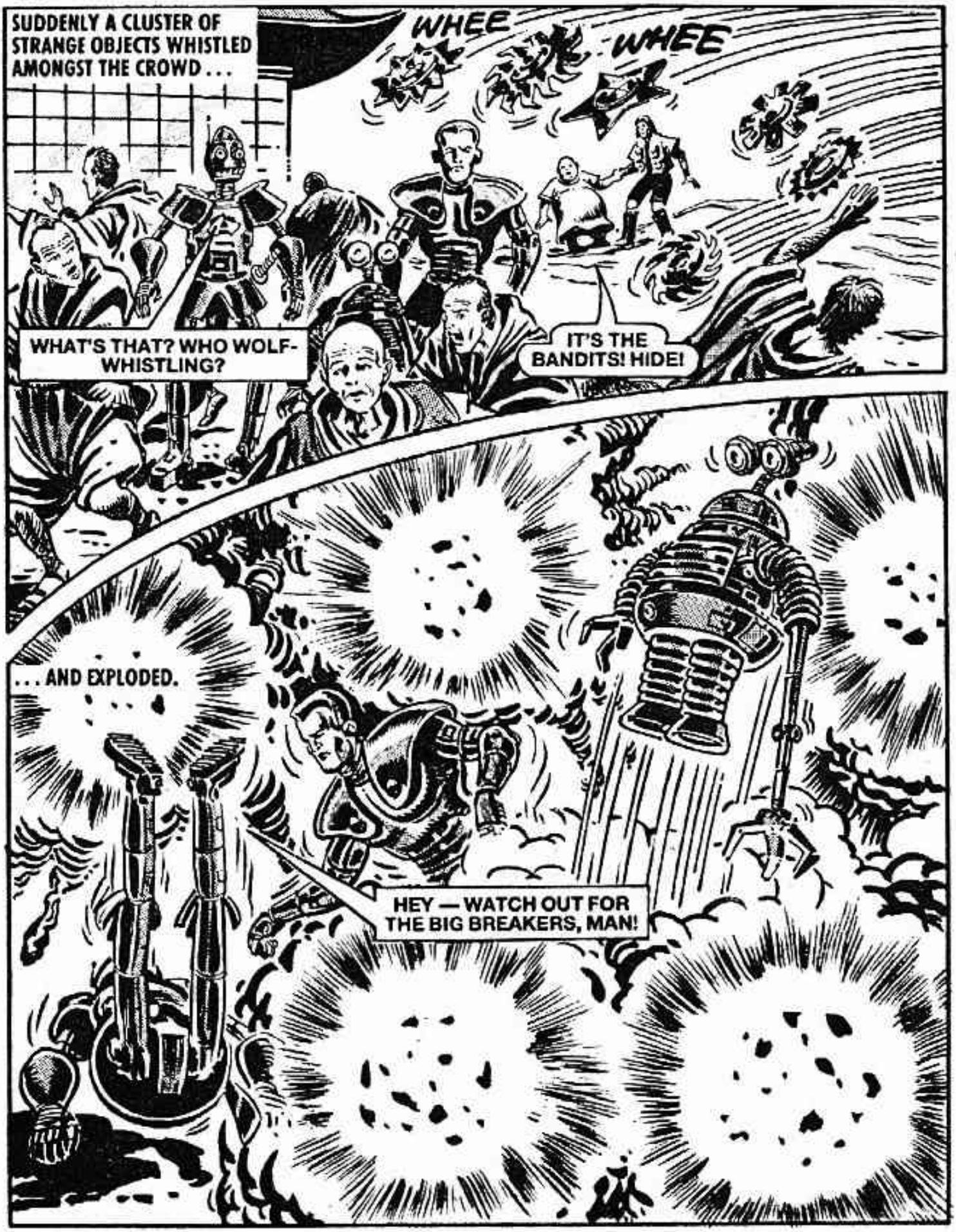

. . . THEY'RE AS TOUGH . . .
BOOP!
. . . AS ME!
DINK

AS THE SUN ROSE, DAIMYO'S SKIMMER REACHED THE CALM VILLAGE OF LI'ANG.


THIS IS INCREDIBLE! I'VE NEVER KNOWN A PLACE SO PEACEFUL!
IT AIN'T BAD, DAD. BUT I DON'T THINK MUCH OF THE BEACH.

MY FRIENDS, OUR WORRIES ARE OVER! AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, AT OUR VERY MOMENT OF NEED, THE ROBOT KID CAME TO HAI'ASHING!

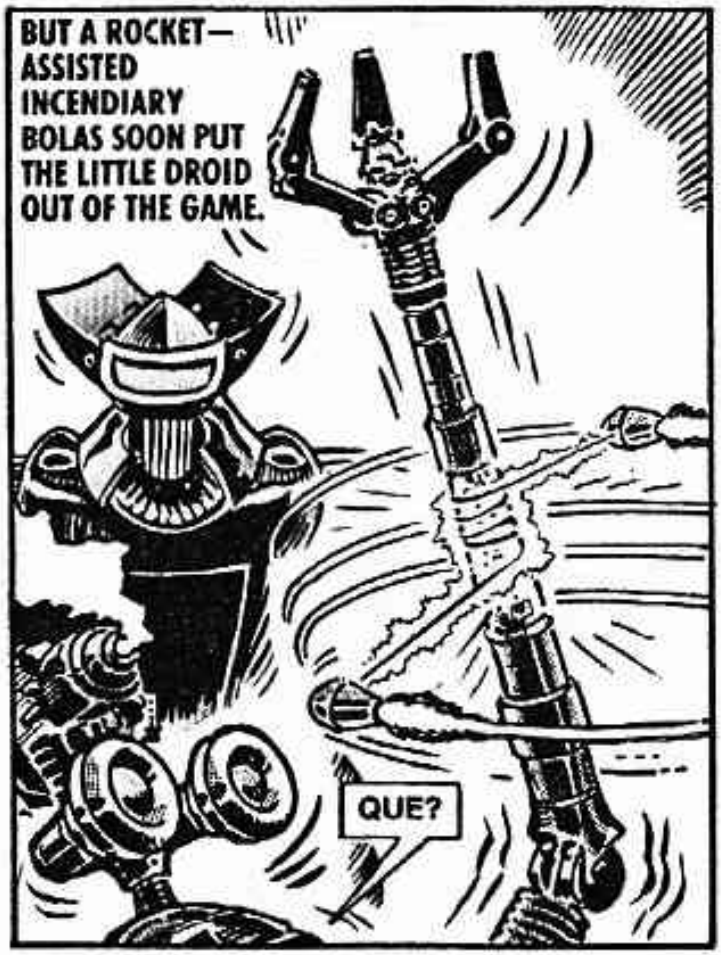
COME, FRANK MANCO, YOU WILL NEED TO REFRESH YOURSELF. FOLLOW ME — WE WILL LEAVE THE ROBOT KID TO LOOK AFTER THE VILLAGE.
ARE YOU NUTS? HAVE YOU ANY IDEA WHAT THAT VIDEODROID CAN DO IF LEFT ALONE FOR HALF AN HOUR?

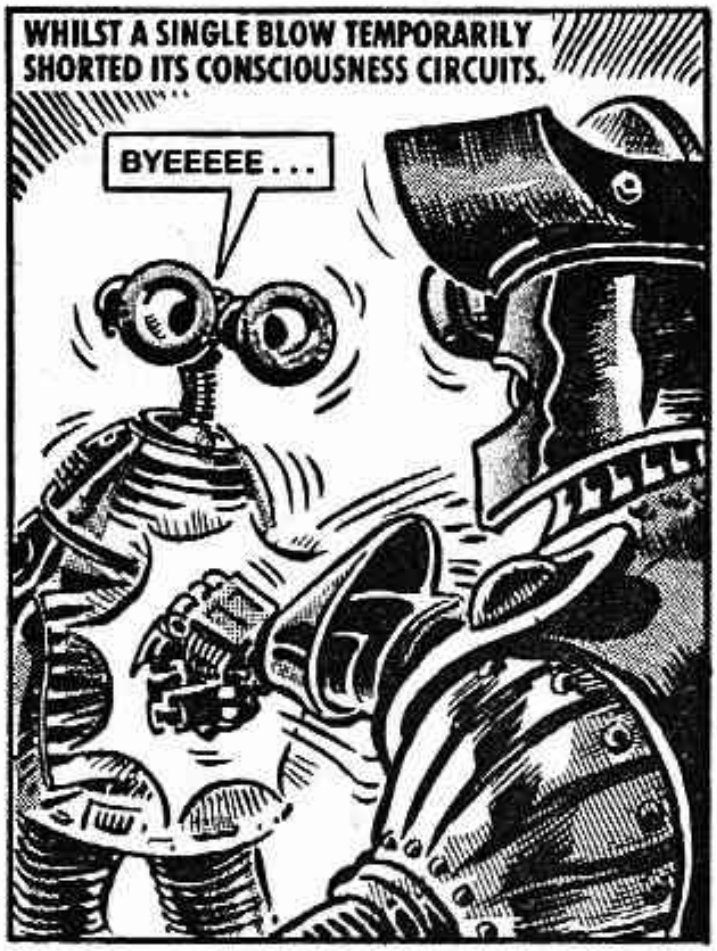

SUDDENLY A CLUSTER OF STRANGE OBJECTS WHISTLED AMONGST THE CROWD . . .
WHEE
WHEE
WHAT'S THAT? WHO WOLF-WHISTLING?
IT'S THE BANDITS! HIDE!
. . . AND EXPLODED.
HEY — WATCH OUT FOR THE BIG BREAKERS, MAN!

VILLAGERS OF LI'ANG! I SEE YOU HAVE THOUGHT TO BRING IN OFF-WORLD HELP! OBSERVE THEN, HOW MEK-SAMA DESTROYS THEM.
HOW HE KNOW WE HERE?
WHO CARES! LET'S JUST GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE YOU END UP A PILE OF SECOND-HAND MICRO-CIRCUITS. AND STOP TALKING LIKE THAT!
NO — WARRIOR NEVER FLEE ENEMY. NINJI! SANDY! OUR FOE APPROACHES.
THE DROID BEGAN TO WALK SLOWLY TOWARDS THE BANDIT HORDE.

BOTH SIDES MET WITH A CLASH.
BONSAI!
YEAH! LET'S HOT-ROD THE SQUARES! SURF'S UP!
SANDY WAS THE FIRST CASUALTY.
OOF! MIND THE LINES, MAN! THIS BODY'S CUSTOM PAINTED, YOU DIG!

NINJI FOUGHT BRAVELY AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS, VOICING BATTLE CRIES IN SEVERAL LANGUAGES.
TAKE THAT! 23.089+3(72x5s−1)÷×! ACBEAHLIA! BUENOS DIAS, SENOR. OBRIGADO, DE NADA!


BUT A ROCKET—ASSISTED INCENDIARY BOLAS SOON PUT THE LITTLE DROID OUT OF THE GAME.
QUE?


WHILST A SINGLE BLOW TEMPORARILY SHORTED ITS CONSCIOUSNESS CIRCUITS.
BYEEEEE . . .

AND ALL THE WHILE, MISSING DISASTER BY A SHORT STEP EVERY TIME, THE ROBOT KID GOT CLOSER TO MEK-SAMA.
STAND GROUND AND FIGHT! THE FORCES OF GOOD ARE UPON YOU!
I SEE ONLY A FOOLISH VIDEODROID — ONE THAT WILL SOON BE NO MORE THAN RUSTING SHRAPNEL!

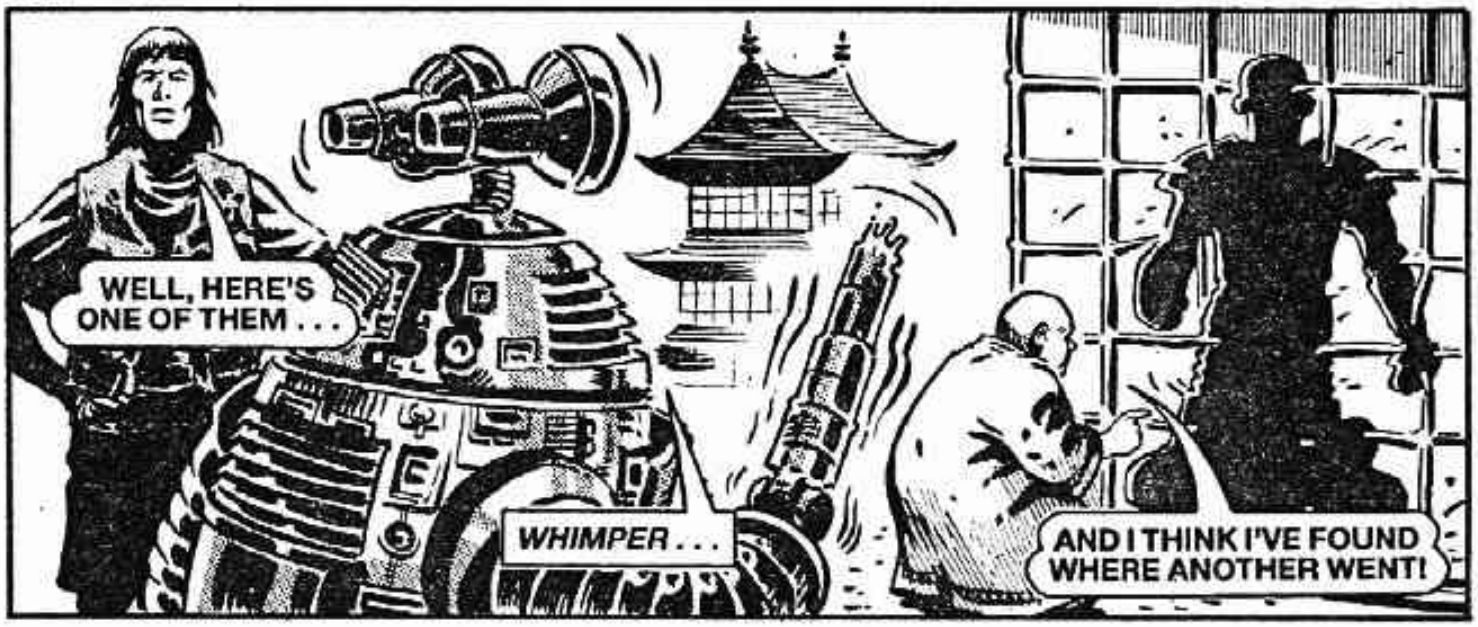
MEK-SAMA SWUNG A DEADLY FIST, BUT MISSED AS THE ROBOT KID SKIDDED ON A PATCH OF WET GRASS.
DONG!

WHERE YOU GO?
YEOOWL!
THE KID'S BLUNDERING ANTICS CAUGHT MEK-SAMA UNAWARES —

IN PAIN AND ANGER, MEK-SAMA'S MOUNT REARED DANGEROUSLY AS THE ROBOT KID STEADFASTLY REMAINED STANDING ON THE POOR BEAST'S REAR FOOT.
YOU HAVE DANGEROUS ANIMAL HERE! RECOMMEND YOU HAVE IT SEEN TO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

IN A LAST EFFORT TO BE FREE OF THE PAIN, THE CREATURE ROLLED OVER ON TO THE GROUND — UNFORTUNATELY, RIGHT ON TOP OF THE ROBOT KID.
MMMFPP!
YOU'RE RIGHT! MY DRAGLION IS DANGEROUS.

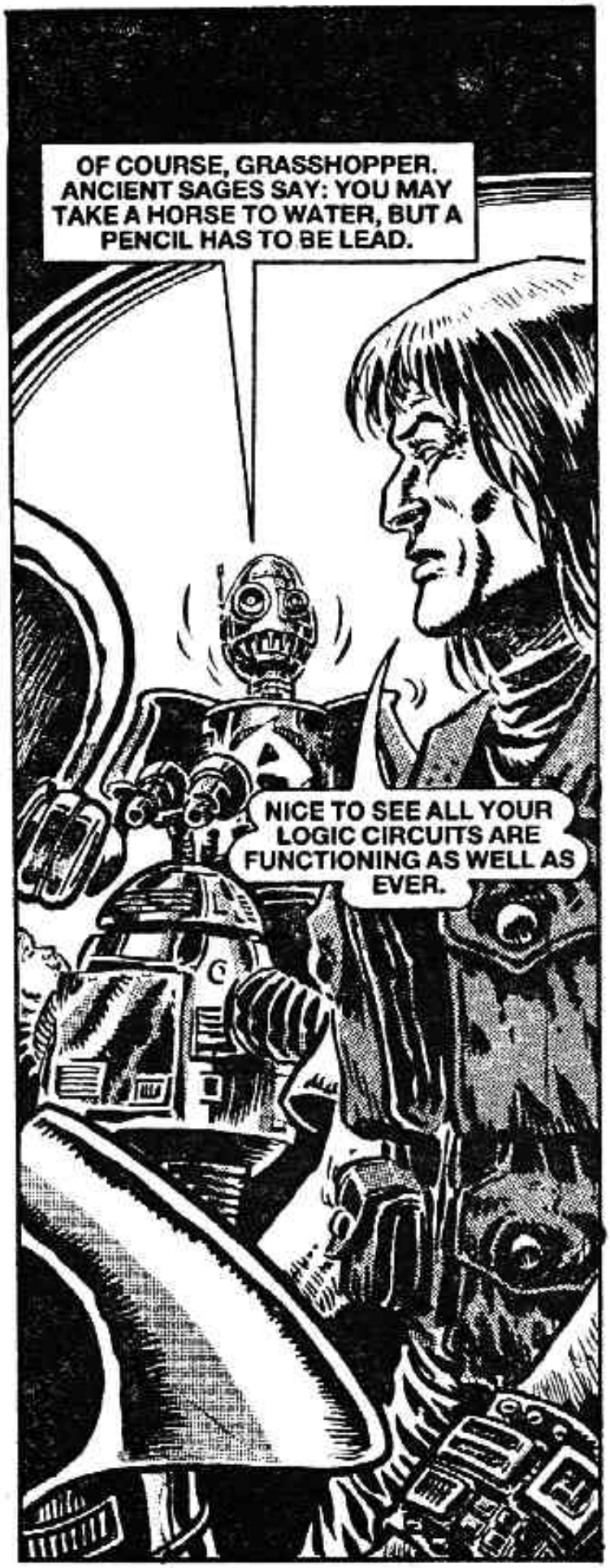
AND SO THE ROBOT KID MEETS ITS UNDIGNIFIED END! REST IN PIECES, GARBAGE-HEAP!
MEK-SAMA SWUNG INTO ITS SADDLE, AND RODE AWAY FROM THE STILL SHAPE, PRESSED INTO THE GROUND.
AS MEK-SAMA, THE BANDITS ALSO FLED, LEAVING THE VILLAGE PEACEFUL ONCE AGAIN.
WE'RE SAFE!
NO THANKS TO OUR GALLANT RESCUERS. WHERE ARE THEY, ANYWAY?


WELL, HERE'S ONE OF THEM . . .
WHIMPER . . .
AND I THINK I'VE FOUND WHERE ANOTHER WENT!

. . . ROUND, ROUND, GETTA ROUND, I GETTA ROUND . . . WIPE OUT, MAN!
HERE'S OUR BOY!

BOY — DID YOU SEE THAT BREAKER?
COME ON, HERO. SURF'S UP.

AND DOWN FROM THE HILL CAME AN EVEN MORE STUNNED ROBOT KID.
MASTER! MASTER! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
YO! THE BIG R IS STILL GROOVIN'!


OF COURSE, GRASSHOPPER. ANCIENT SAGES SAY: YOU MAY TAKE A HORSE TO WATER, BUT A PENCIL HAS TO BE LEAD.
NICE TO SEE ALL YOUR LOGIC CIRCUITS ARE FUNCTIONING AS WELL AS EVER.

I THINK I SAW THAT MOVIE. DIDN'T TOSHIRO MIFUNE GET HACKED TO PIECES AT THE END?
THANK YOU, MANCO-SAN. NOW, MUST GET VILLAGERS ORGANISED. ONLY WAY TO BEAT BANDITS IS COMBINING FORCES.

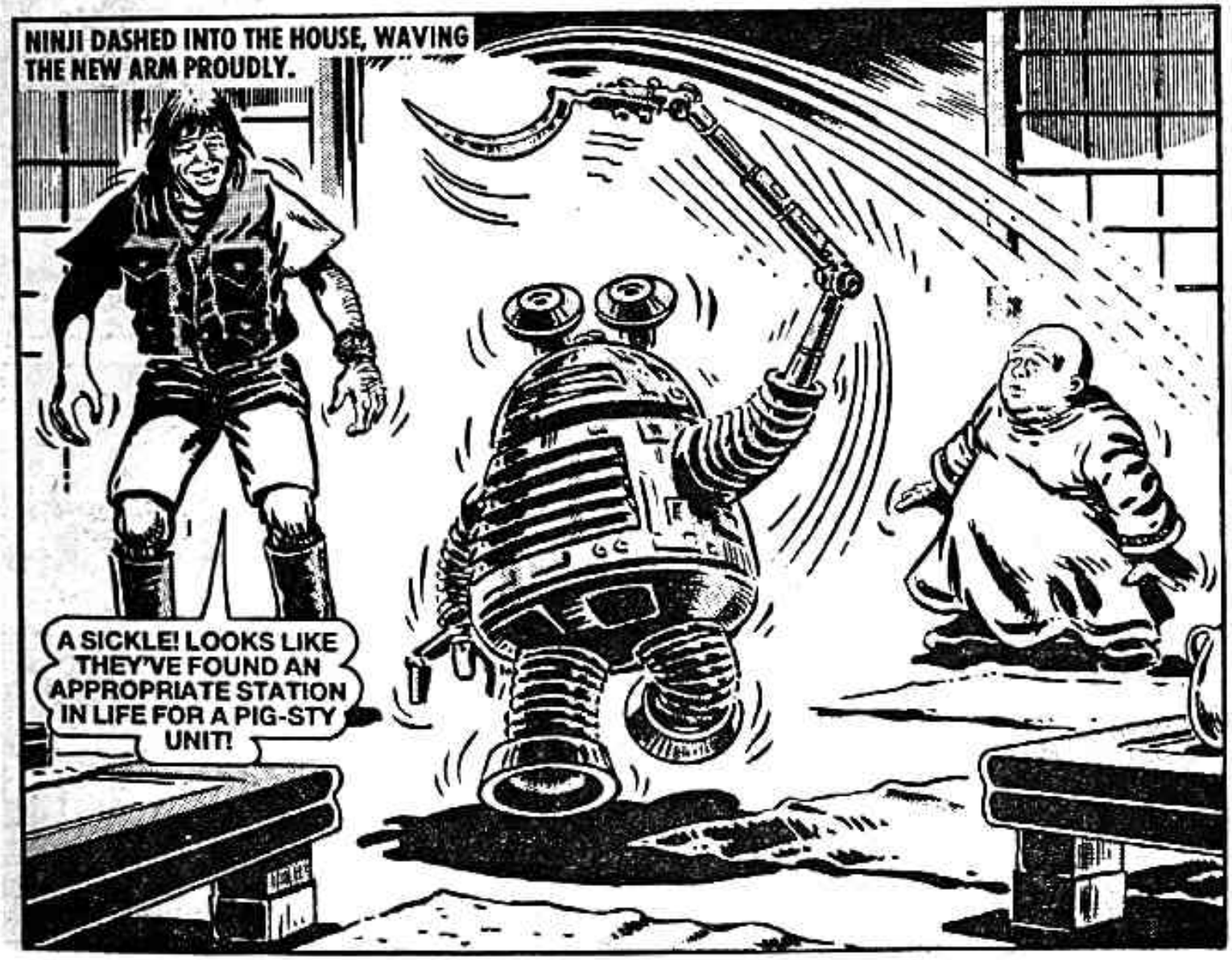
I LOVE THIS BIT — THIS IS WHERE WE GET A 'DROID'S GOTTA DO WHAT A DROID'S GOTTA DO' SPEECH.

LET'S LEAVE THE FOOL. BESIDES I WANT A QUIET WORD WITH YOU ABOUT THESE "BANDITS".
LEAVING THE RANTING DROID BEHIND THEM, MANCO AND DAIMYO RETURNED TO THE LITTLE MAN'S HOUSE.

INSIDE DAIMYO'S SIMPLE HOUSE, THE SMALLER MAN SERVED LOCAL REFRESHMENT.
YOU NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT THE LEADER OF THIS BAND, AND HALF THE MEMBERS OF IT, BEING ROGUE DROIDS! THIS PUTS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FACE ON IT.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. HOW DOES IT?

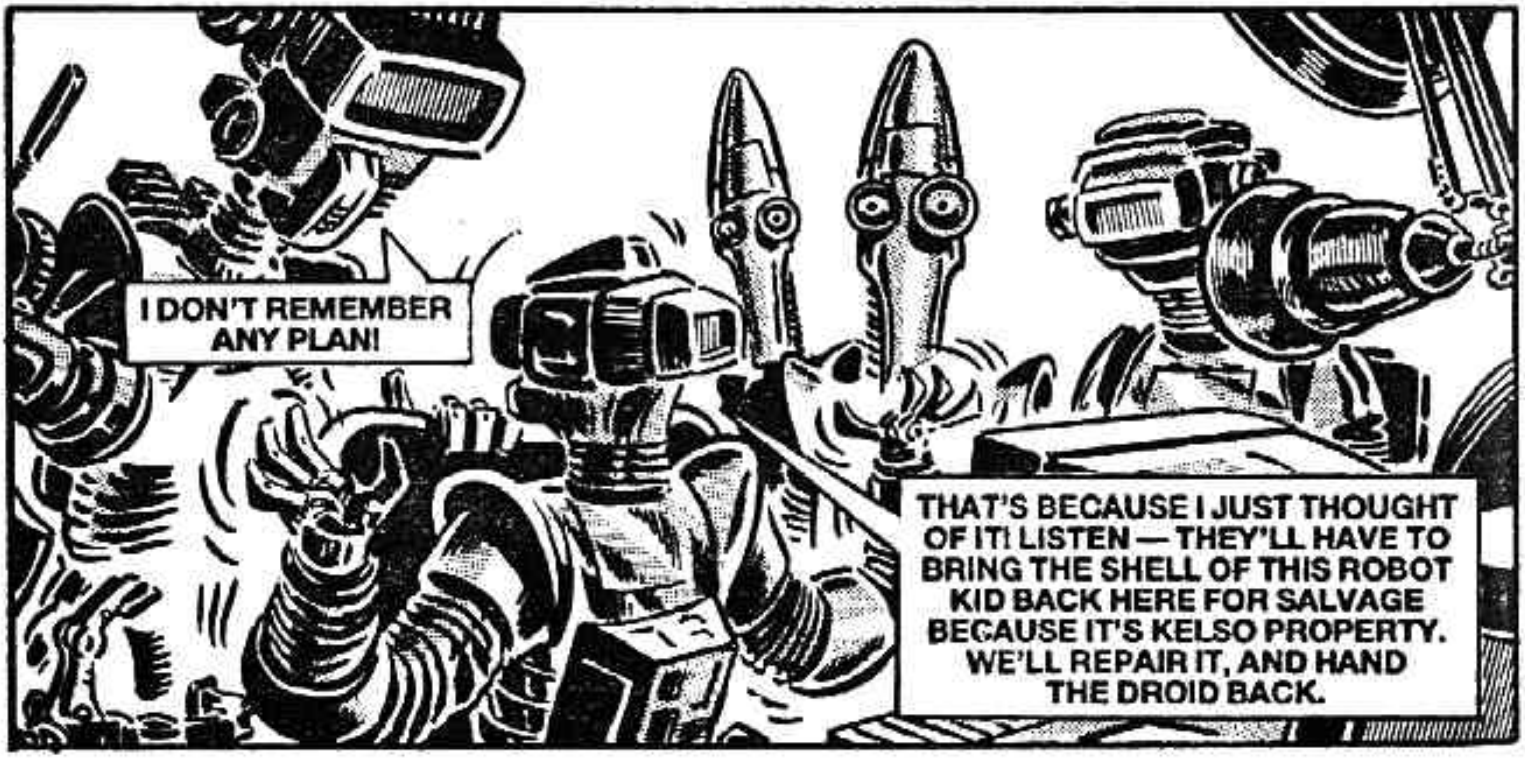
EVERY DROID IN THE GALAXY IS CATALOGUED. EVENTUALLY THEY'RE RECLAIMED, REPROGRAMMED, OR LEFT WHERE THEY ARE IF THE SALVAGE COST IS TOO HIGH. BUT I CAN TELL YOU NOW, THERE'S NO RECORD OF ANY DROIDS OF THIS SORT ON THIS PLANET.
THEN WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
SOMEONE IS MAKING DROIDS HERE!

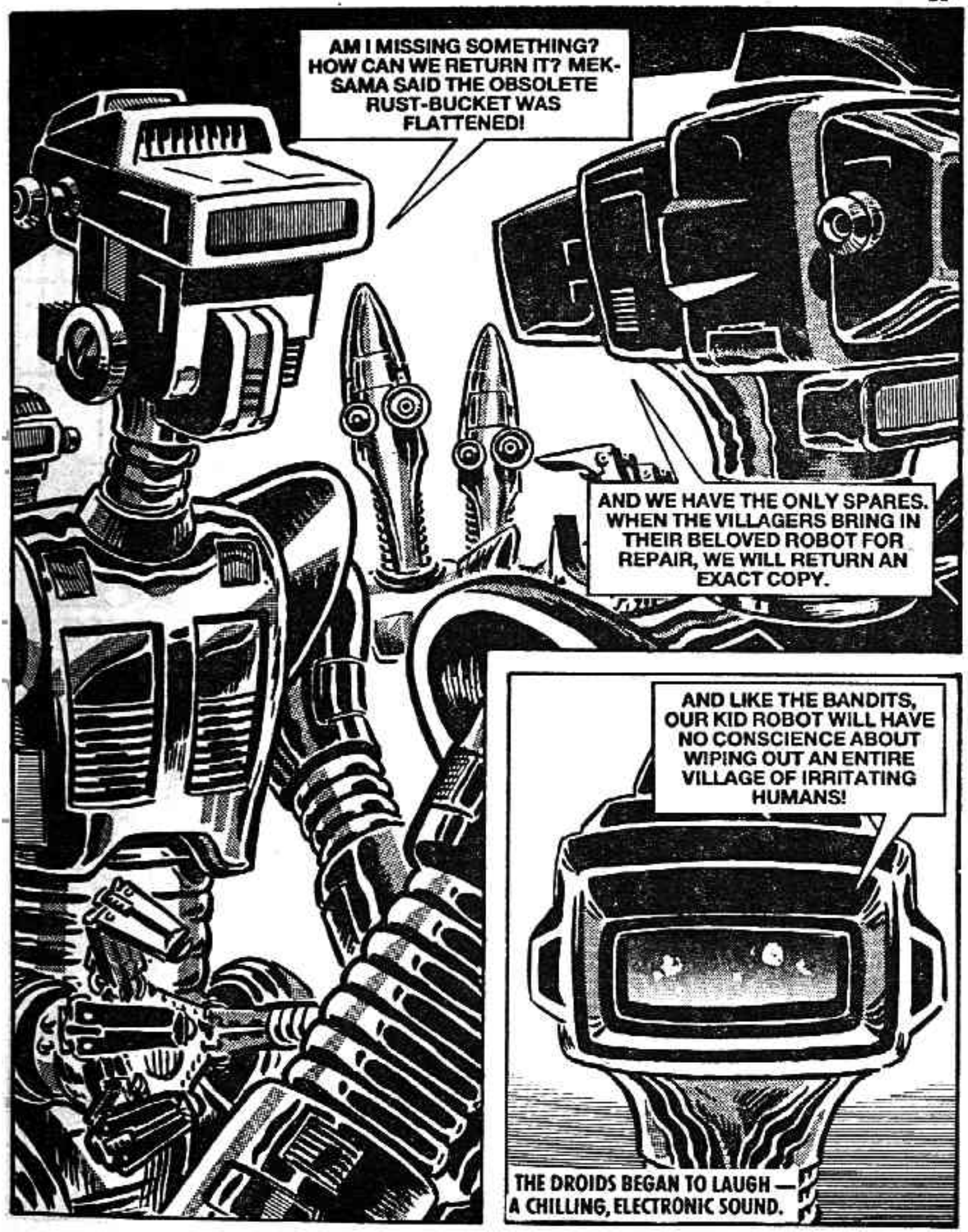
AT THAT MOMENT, TWO VILLAGERS INTERRUPTED THEM.
PARDON THE INTRUSION, HONOURABLE DAIMYO, BUT WE HAVE TRIED TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE TO THE LITTLE ONE.
AH, COME IN, COME IN.


NINJI DASHED INTO THE HOUSE, WAVING THE NEW ARM PROUDLY.
A SICKLE! LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE FOUND AN APPROPRIATE STATION IN LIFE FOR A PIG-STY UNIT!

MEANWHILE, MEK-SAMA WAS TALKING URGENTLY WITH THE KELSO ROBOTS BRANCH.
I'M NO LONGER PREPARED TO WAIT! THE ARRIVAL OF THAT ROBOT KID CHARACTER MAY WELL HAVE UPSET THINGS — ESPECIALLY IF ITS HUMAN KEEPER STARTS TO ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS. BRING THE PLAN FORWARD!

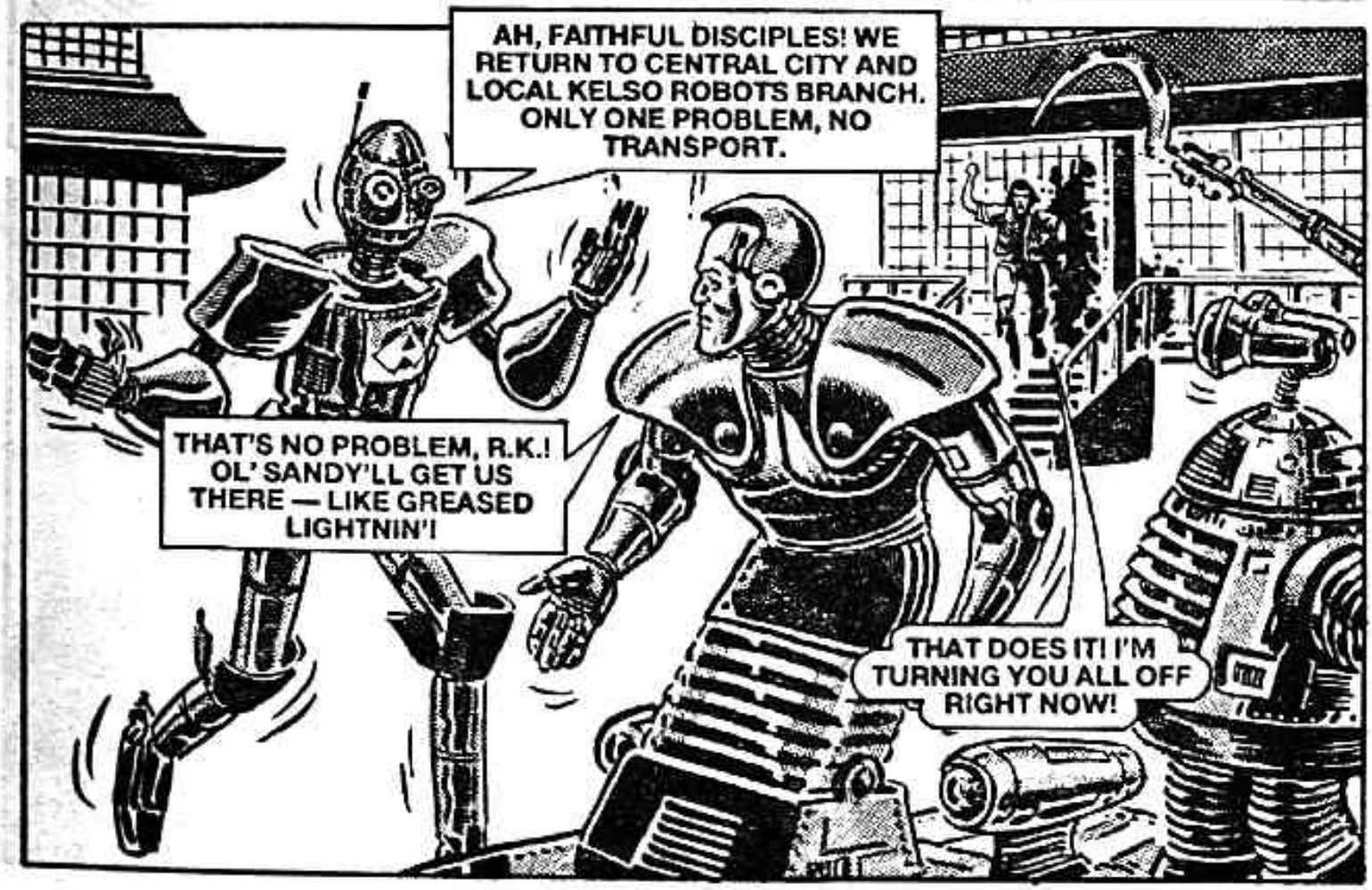
AND IN THE LOCAL BRANCH OFFICE —
YES, MASTER. AS YOU COMMAND. AND WE HAVE A PLAN TO DEAL FINALLY WITH THE VILLAGERS OF LI'ANG!


I DON'T REMEMBER ANY PLAN!
THAT'S BECAUSE I JUST THOUGHT OF IT! LISTEN — THEY'LL HAVE TO BRING THE SHELL OF THIS ROBOT KID BACK HERE FOR SALVAGE BECAUSE IT'S KELSO PROPERTY. WE'LL REPAIR IT, AND HAND THE DROID BACK.


AM I MISSING SOMETHING? HOW CAN WE RETURN IT? MEK-SAMA SAID THE OBSOLETE RUST-BUCKET WAS FLATTENED!
AND WE HAVE THE ONLY SPARES. WHEN THE VILLAGERS BRING IN THEIR BELOVED ROBOT FOR REPAIR, WE WILL RETURN AN EXACT COPY.
AND LIKE THE BANDITS, OUR KID ROBOT WILL HAVE NO CONSCIENCE ABOUT WIPING OUT AN ENTIRE VILLAGE OF IRRITATING HUMANS!
THE DROIDS BEGAN TO LAUGH — A CHILLING, ELECTRONIC SOUND.

BACK IN LI'ANG, MANCO WAS STILL WORRIED.
I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT THESE UNKNOWN ROGUE DROIDS, DAIMYO. AND MY MIND KEEPS COMING BACK TO THE NEW STYLE KILLDROIDS — THE ONES WITH MODIFIED ROBOTIC LAWS.
LIKE THE ONES AT THE KELSO ROBOTS BRANCH?
EXACTLY! I MAY BE WRONG, BUT I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THERE'S SOME CONNECTION BETWEEN THEM AND MEK-SAMA'S BAND.
CONNECTION? BETWEEN WHO?
BRINGING HALF A DOOR WITH IT, THE ROBOT KID LURCHED INTO THE ROOM.

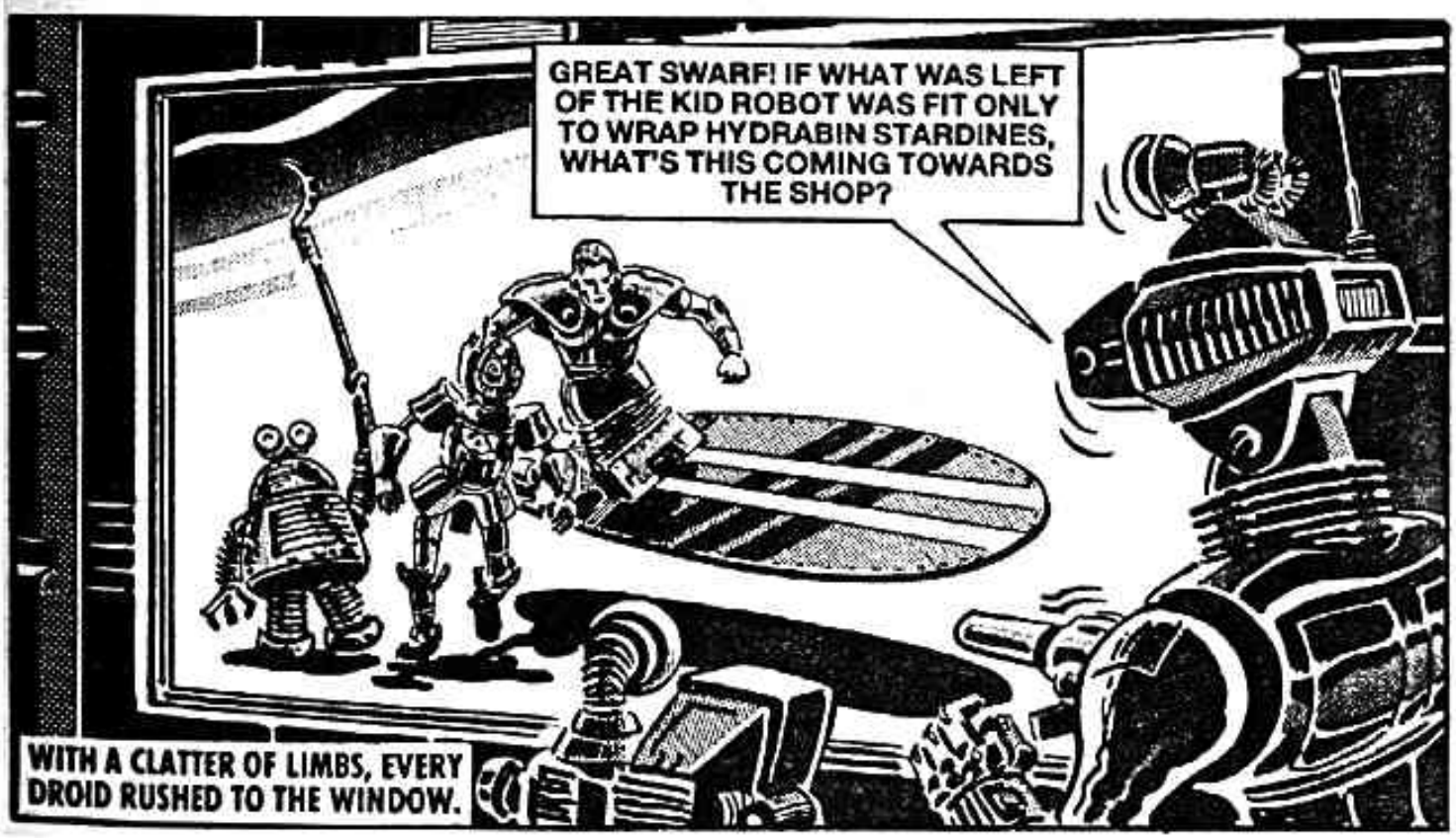
MANCO THINKS THE KELSO BRANCH MAY BE INVOLVED . . .
SAY NO MORE! ALWAYS THOUGHT DISHONOURABLE ROBOTS NO GOOD! WILL INVESTIGATE IMMEDIATELY.


AH, FAITHFUL DISCIPLES! WE RETURN TO CENTRAL CITY AND LOCAL KELSO ROBOTS BRANCH. ONLY ONE PROBLEM, NO TRANSPORT.
THAT'S NO PROBLEM, R.K.! OL' SANDY'LL GET US THERE — LIKE GREASED LIGHTNIN'!
THAT DOES IT! I'M TURNING YOU ALL OFF RIGHT NOW!

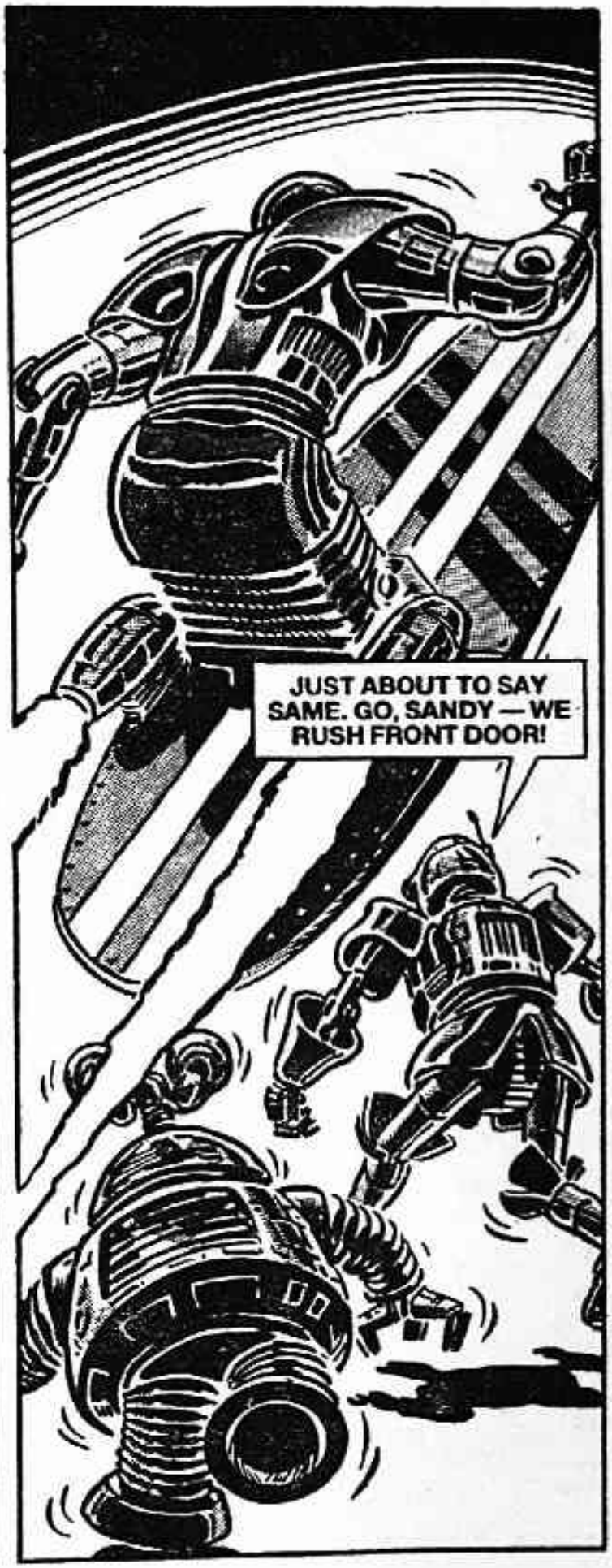
YOUR MAIN MAN DON'T SOUND HAPPY TO ME, R.K. ". . . GO GREASED LIGHTNIN' . . ."
AS THEY SPED HIGHER, THE ENRAGED VOICE OF FRANK MANCO FADED BEHIND THEM.
WELL — I GUESS THAT'S THE LAST WE'LL SEE OF THAT TRIO.
YOU'RE TOO CYNICAL, FRANK MANCO. I THINK THE SPIRITS OF GOOD FORTUNE WATCH OVER YOUR METAL FRIEND.

FRIEND? SOME FRIEND! WHAT KIND OF FRIEND DEVOTES HIS ENTIRE LIFE TO GIVING YOU NERVOUS TICS AND ULCERS?
MANCO WALKED MISERABLY AWAY, WATCHED BY A THOUGHTFUL DAIMYO.

AT THE KELSO BRANCH, WORK WAS GOING ON FURIOUSLY.
WELL? HOW'S IT COMING?
ALMOST DONE! ALL THAT'S LEFT TO DO IS REFINE THE SPEECH CENTRES, AND YOU WOULDN'T KNOW IT FROM THE ORIGINAL.

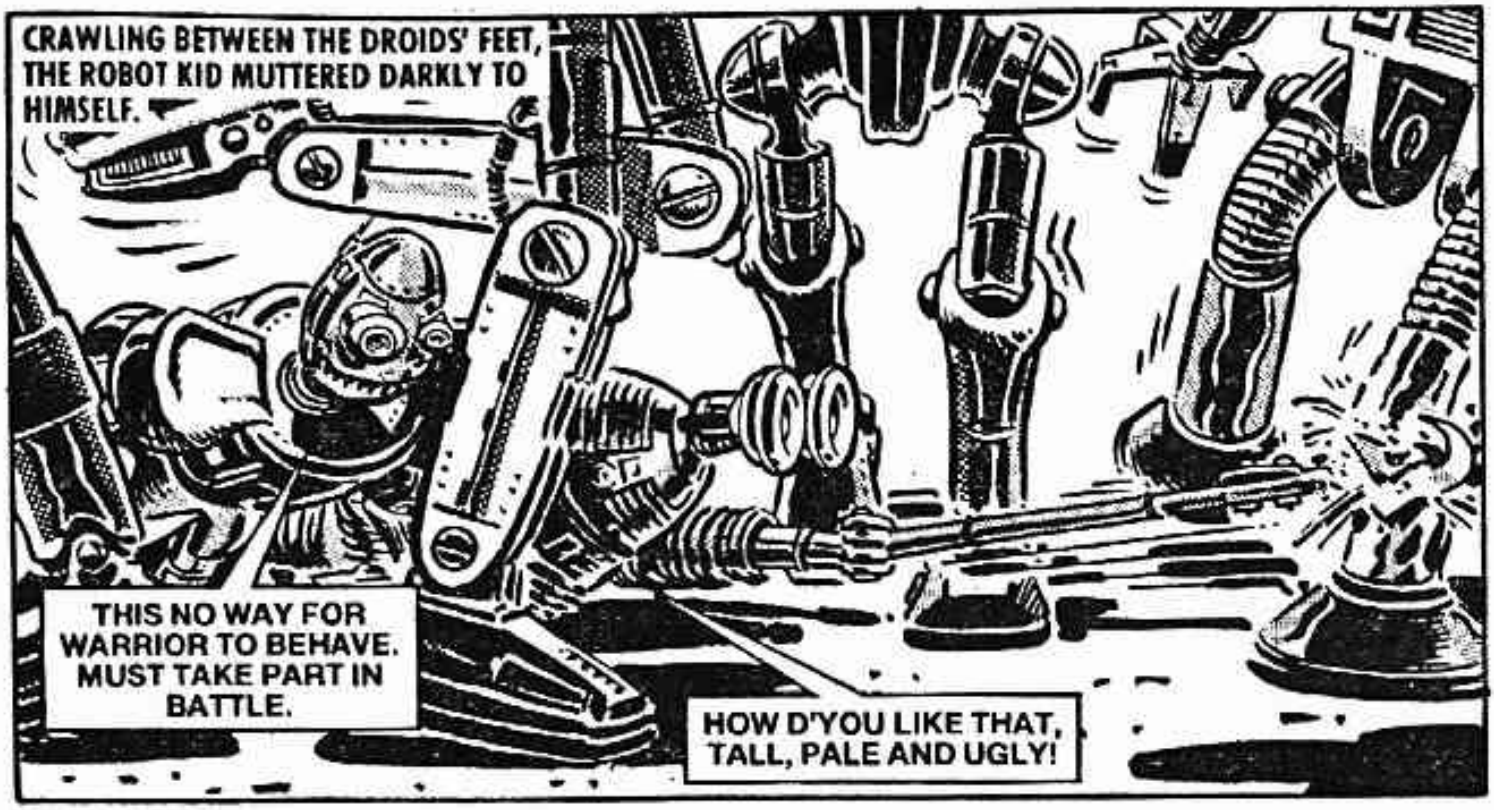

GREAT SWARF! IF WHAT WAS LEFT OF THE KID ROBOT WAS FIT ONLY TO WRAP HYDRABIN STARDINES, WHAT'S THIS COMING TOWARDS THE SHOP?
WITH A CLATTER OF LIMBS, EVERY DROID RUSHED TO THE WINDOW.

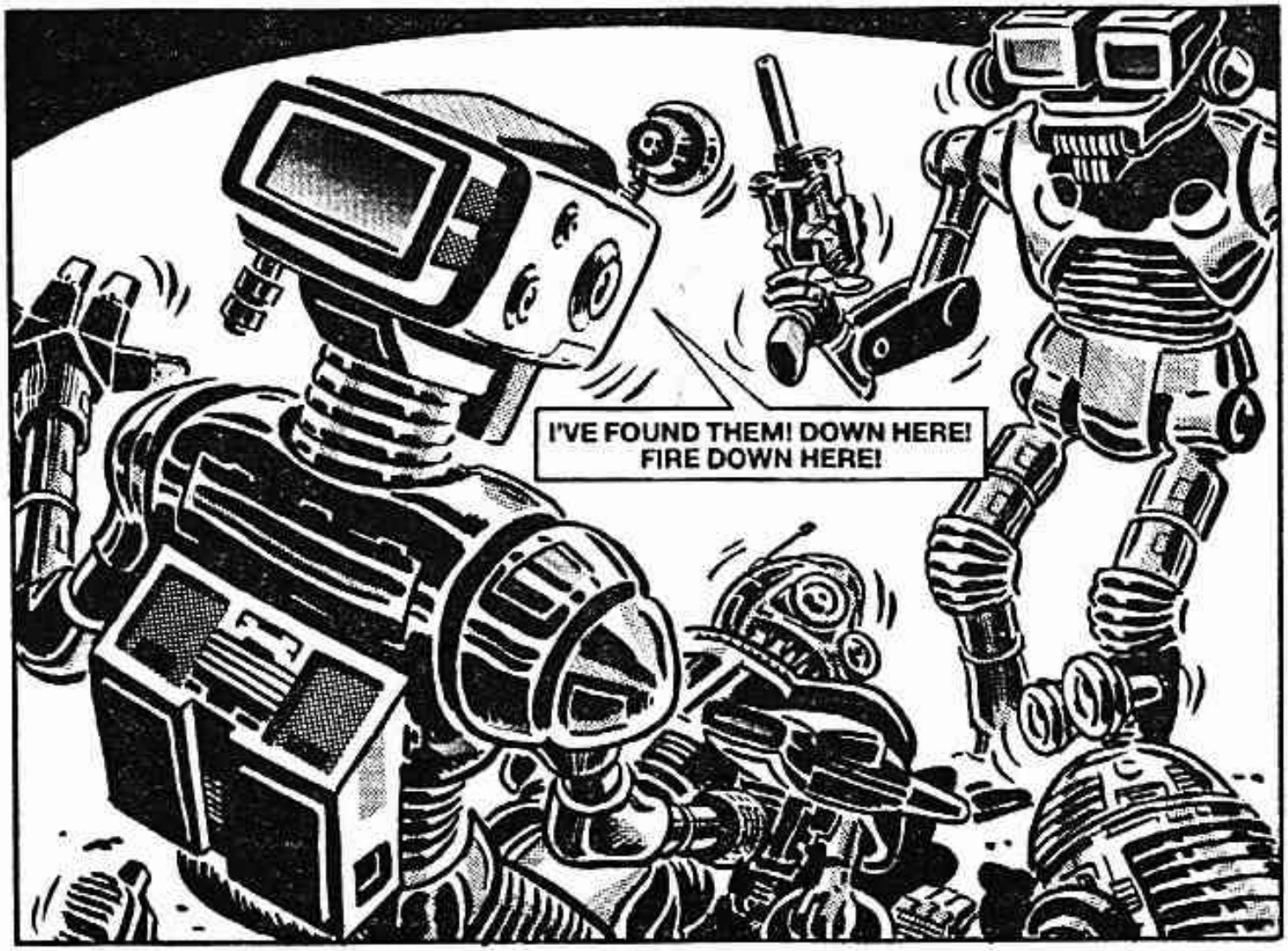
K
KELSO
ROBOTS
WE HERE! I THINK WE ENTER NOW, WITH CAT-LIKE SKILL, BEFORE WE SEEN.
YES, MASTER. I CAN GO THROUGH THE DOOR, WHILST SANDY FLIES OVER AND FINDS A REAR ENTRANCE.

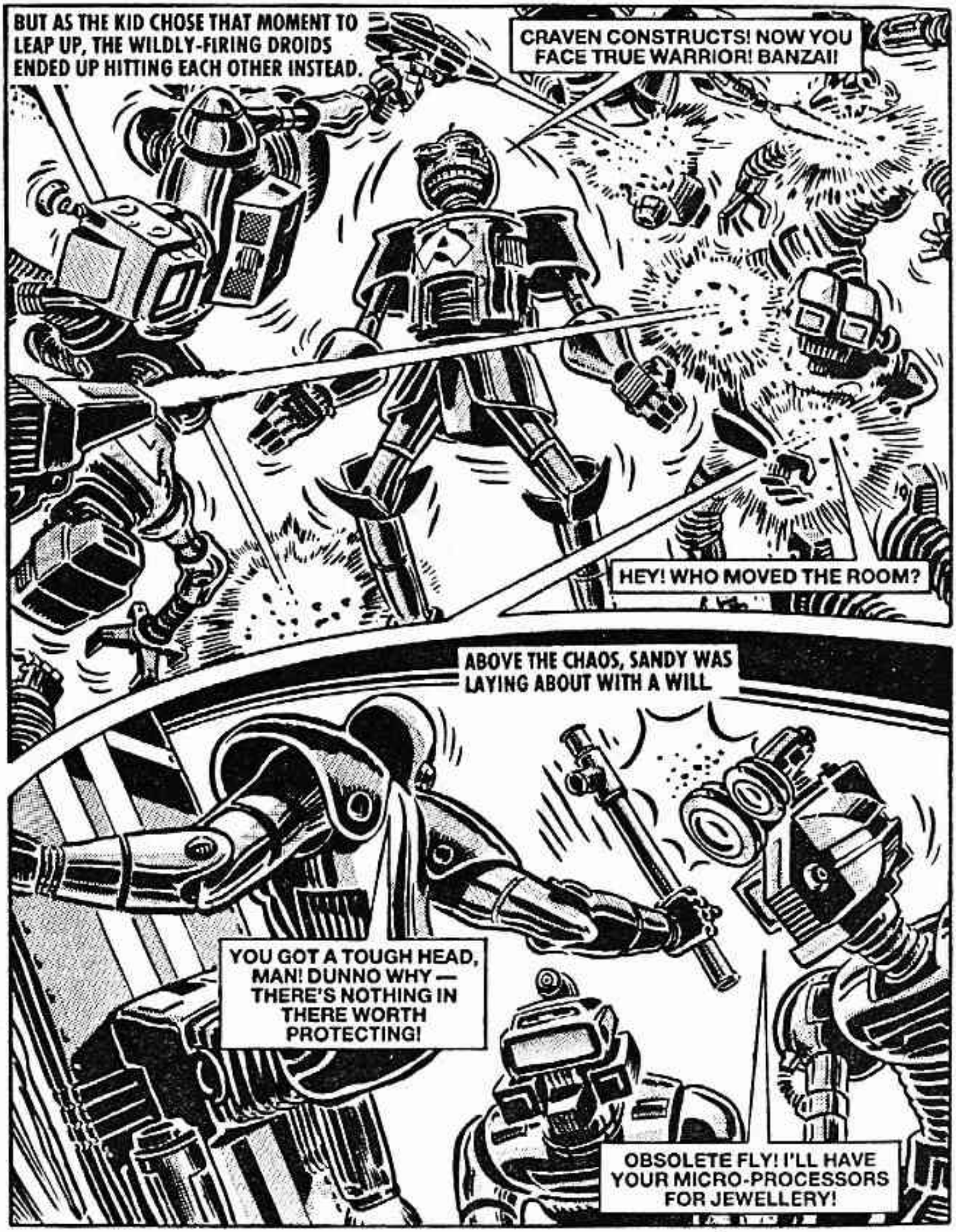

JUST ABOUT TO SAY SAME. GO, SANDY — WE RUSH FRONT DOOR!

BUT THE DOOR OPENED SUDDENLY, TO REVEAL . . .
I THINK WE'RE EXPECTED, MASTER.
OPEN FIRE!

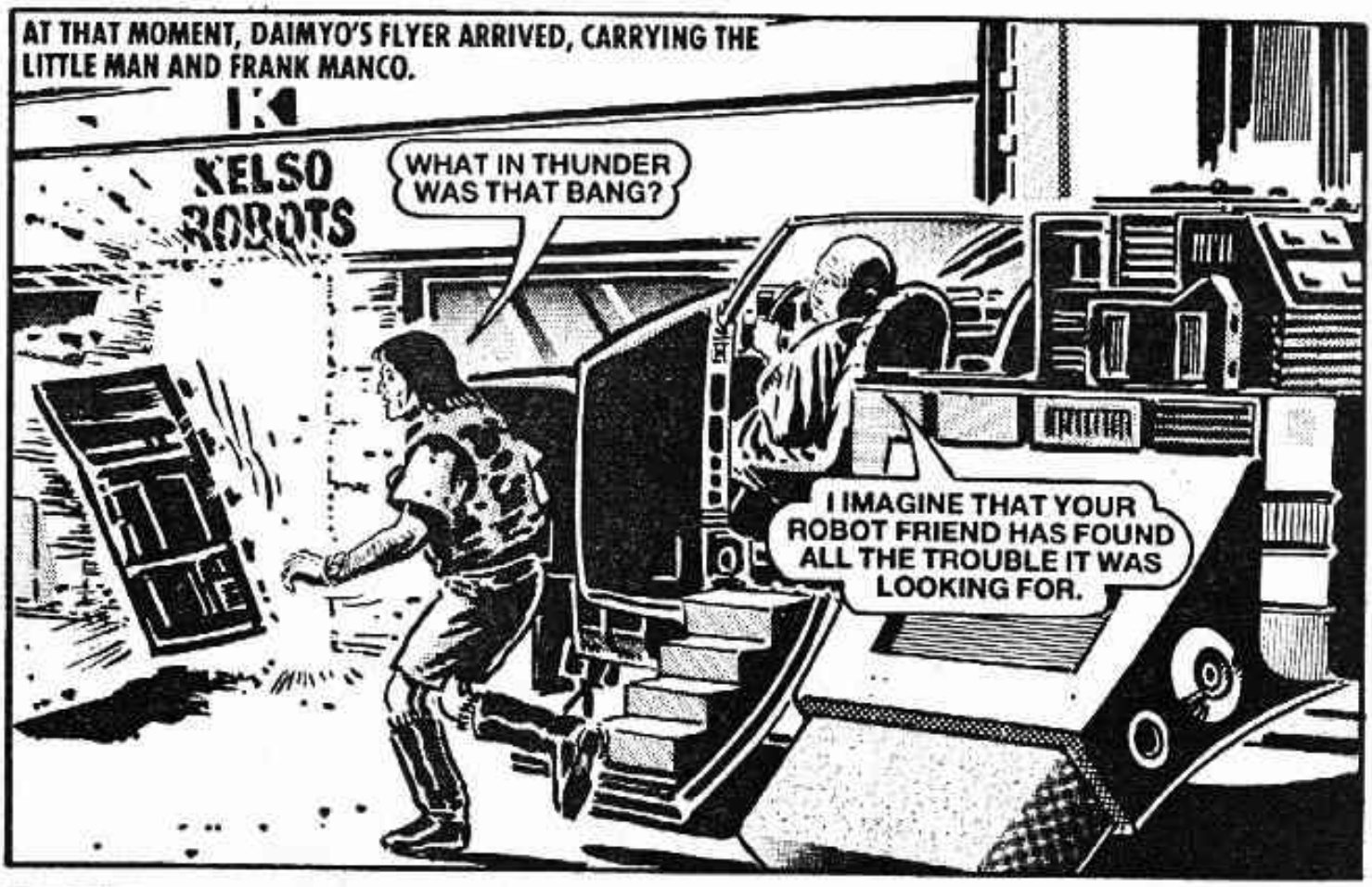
THE ROBOT KID TRIPPED—
NOT POLITE TO POINT —OOF!
THEN, AS SANDY FLEW IN THROUGH A REAR DOOR, TOTAL CONFUSION TOOK OVER — THE BLASTING DROIDS NO LONGER ABLE TO SEE THEIR ENEMY CLEARLY.
HEADS UP, BOYS! OL' BLUE EYES IS BACK!

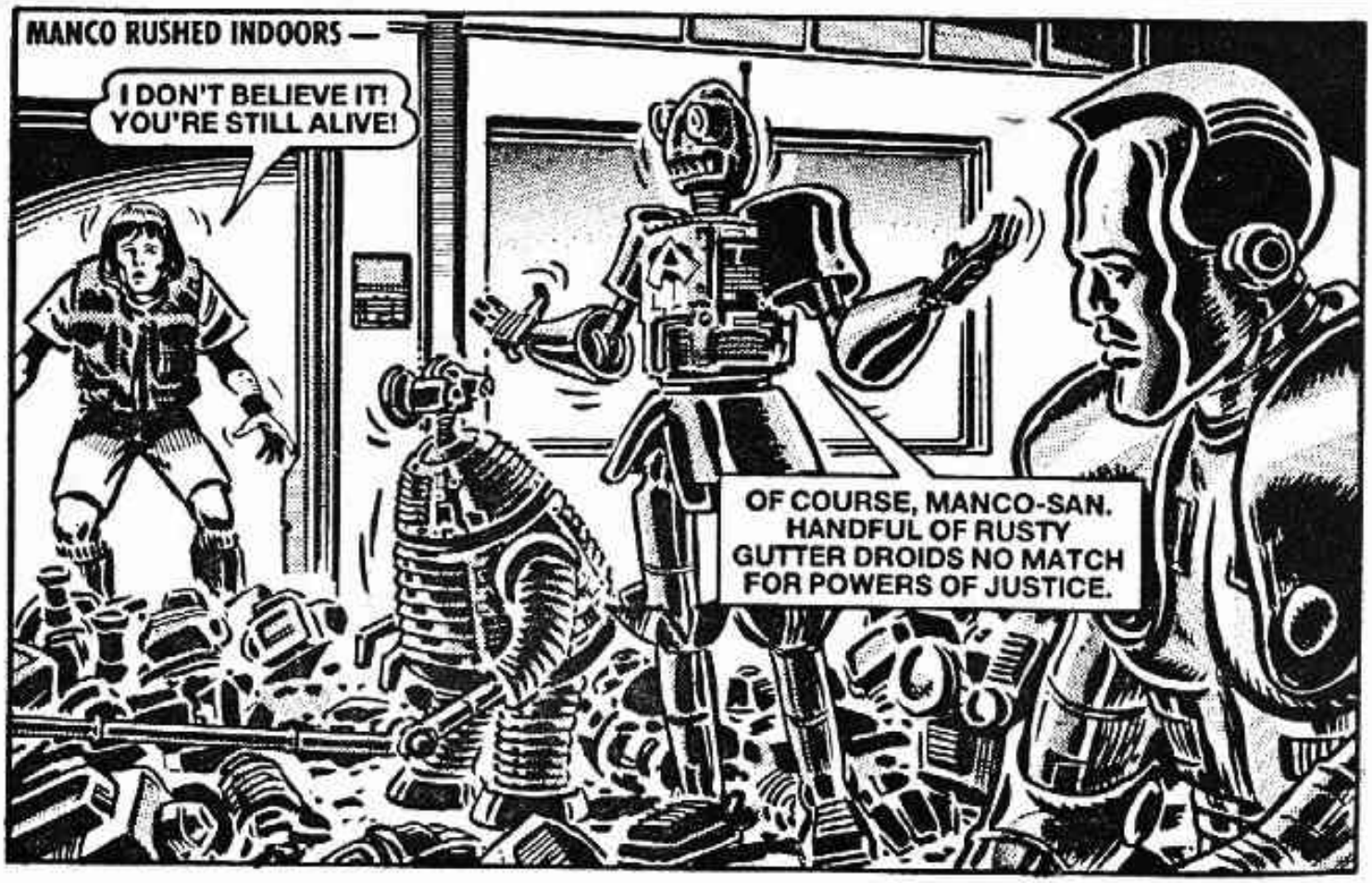

CRAWLING BETWEEN THE DROIDS' FEET, THE ROBOT KID MUTTERED DARKLY TO HIMSELF.
THIS NO WAY FOR WARRIOR TO BEHAVE. MUST TAKE PART IN BATTLE.
HOW D'YOU LIKE THAT, TALL, PALE AND UGLY!


I'VE FOUND THEM! DOWN HERE! FIRE DOWN HERE!


BUT AS THE KID CHOSE THAT MOMENT TO LEAP UP, THE WILDLY-FIRING DROIDS ENDED UP HITTING EACH OTHER INSTEAD.
CRAVEN CONSTRUCTS! NOW YOU FACE TRUE WARRIOR! BANZAI!
HEY! WHO MOVED THE ROOM?
ABOVE THE CHAOS, SANDY WAS LAYING ABOUT WITH A WILL.
YOU GOT A TOUGH HEAD, MAN! DUNNO WHY — THERE'S NOTHING IN THERE WORTH PROTECTING!
OBSOLETE FLY! I'LL HAVE YOUR MICRO-PROCESSORS FOR JEWELLERY!

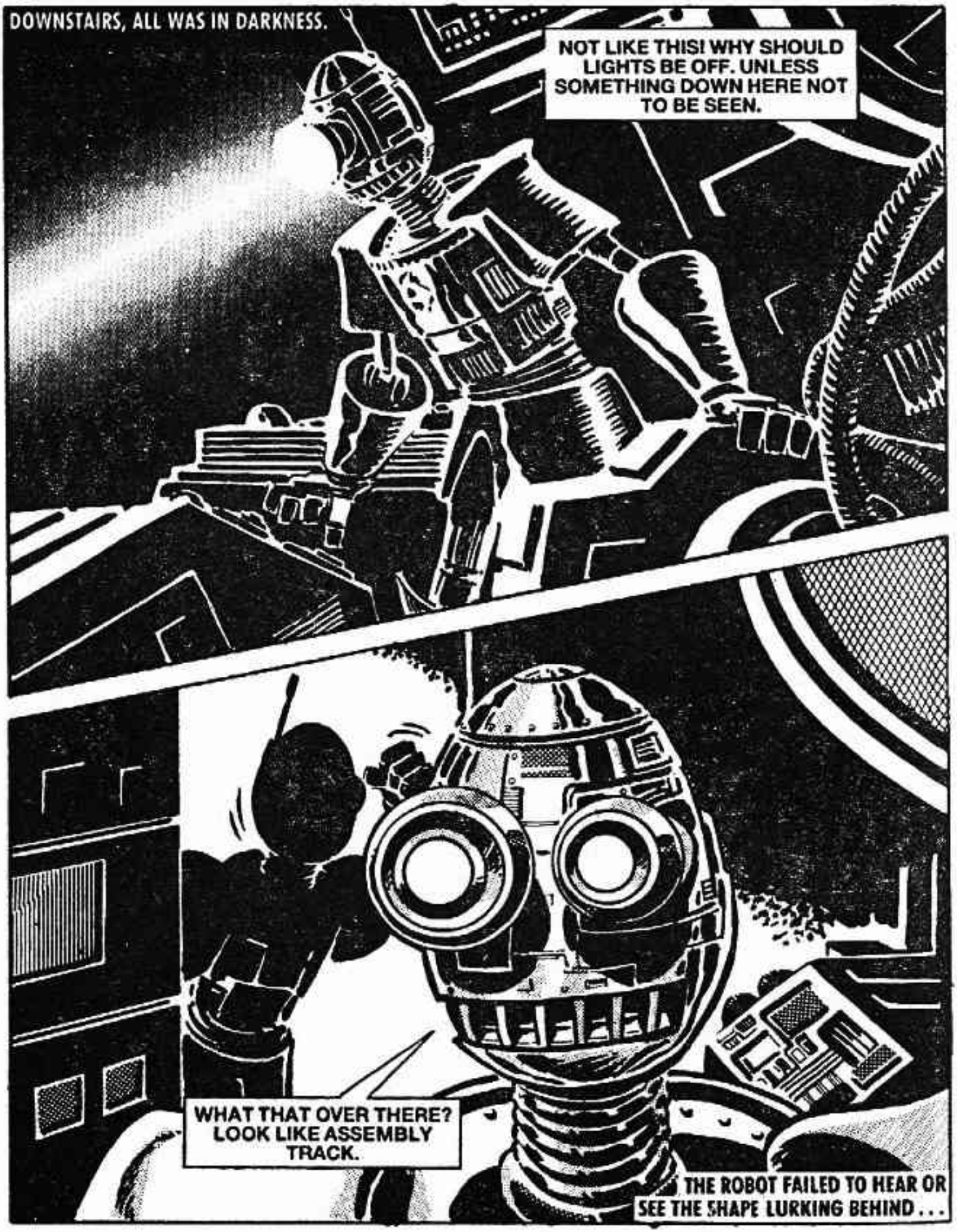
DROPPING LIKE A STONE, SANDY FELL STRAIGHT ONTO THE ROBOT KID, KNOCKING IT TO THE FLOOR YET AGAIN.
DANGER
THIS BECOMING MONOTONOUS!
HOPE, THAT SWITCH ISN'T IMPORTANT.
UNFORTUNATELY, THE SWITCH ACTIVATED THE ROOM'S AUTOMATIC DEFENCE SYSTEMS, AND A DEADLY BLANKET OF ATOMIC POWER SHOT FROM HIDDEN BLASTERS.

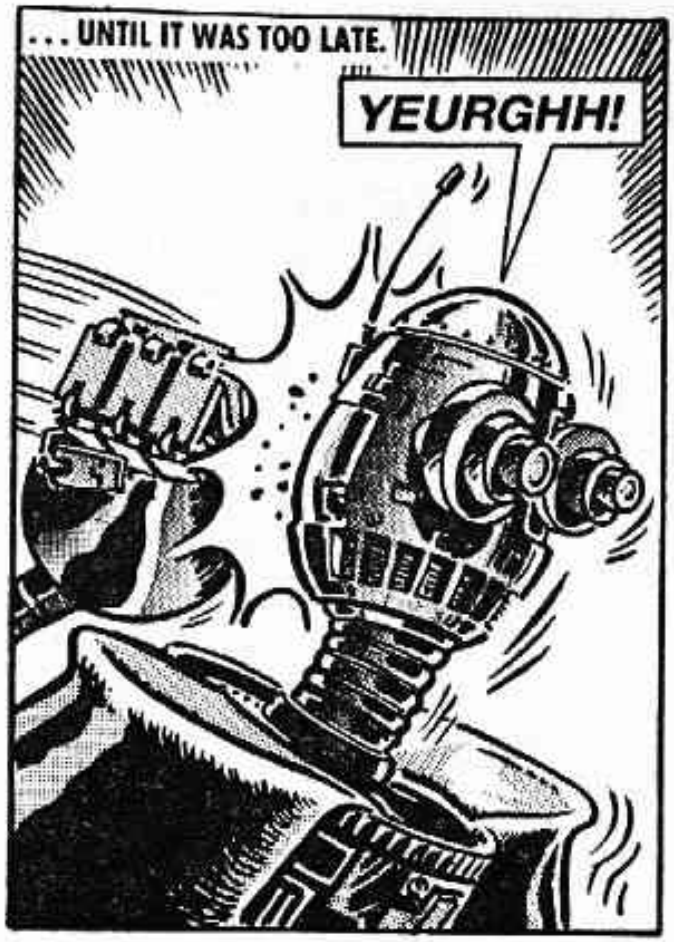

AT THAT MOMENT, DAIMYO'S FLYER ARRIVED, CARRYING THE LITTLE MAN AND FRANK MANCO.
KELSO ROBOTS
WHAT IN THUNDER WAS THAT BANG?
I IMAGINE THAT YOUR ROBOT FRIEND HAS FOUND ALL THE TROUBLE IT WAS LOOKING FOR.


MANCO RUSHED INDOORS —
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! YOU'RE STILL ALIVE!
OF COURSE, MANCO-SAN. HANDFUL OF RUSTY GUTTER DROIDS NO MATCH FOR POWERS OF JUSTICE.

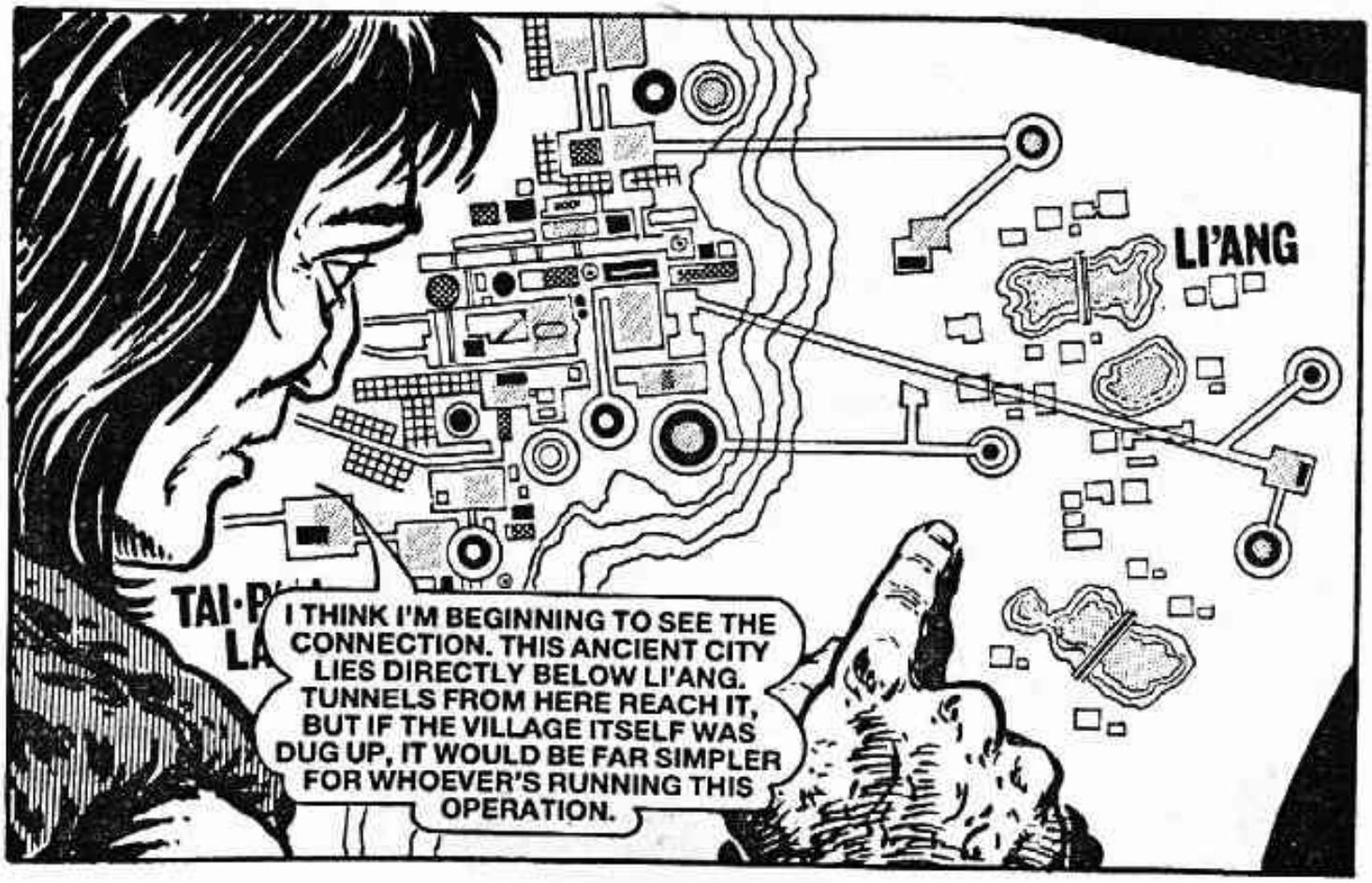
I GIVE UP! YOU MUST HAVE FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES!
NINJI AND SANDY RETURN TO LI'ANG WITH DAIMYO-SAN. MANCO-SAN AND I MUST INVESTIGATE NEST OF VILLAINS.

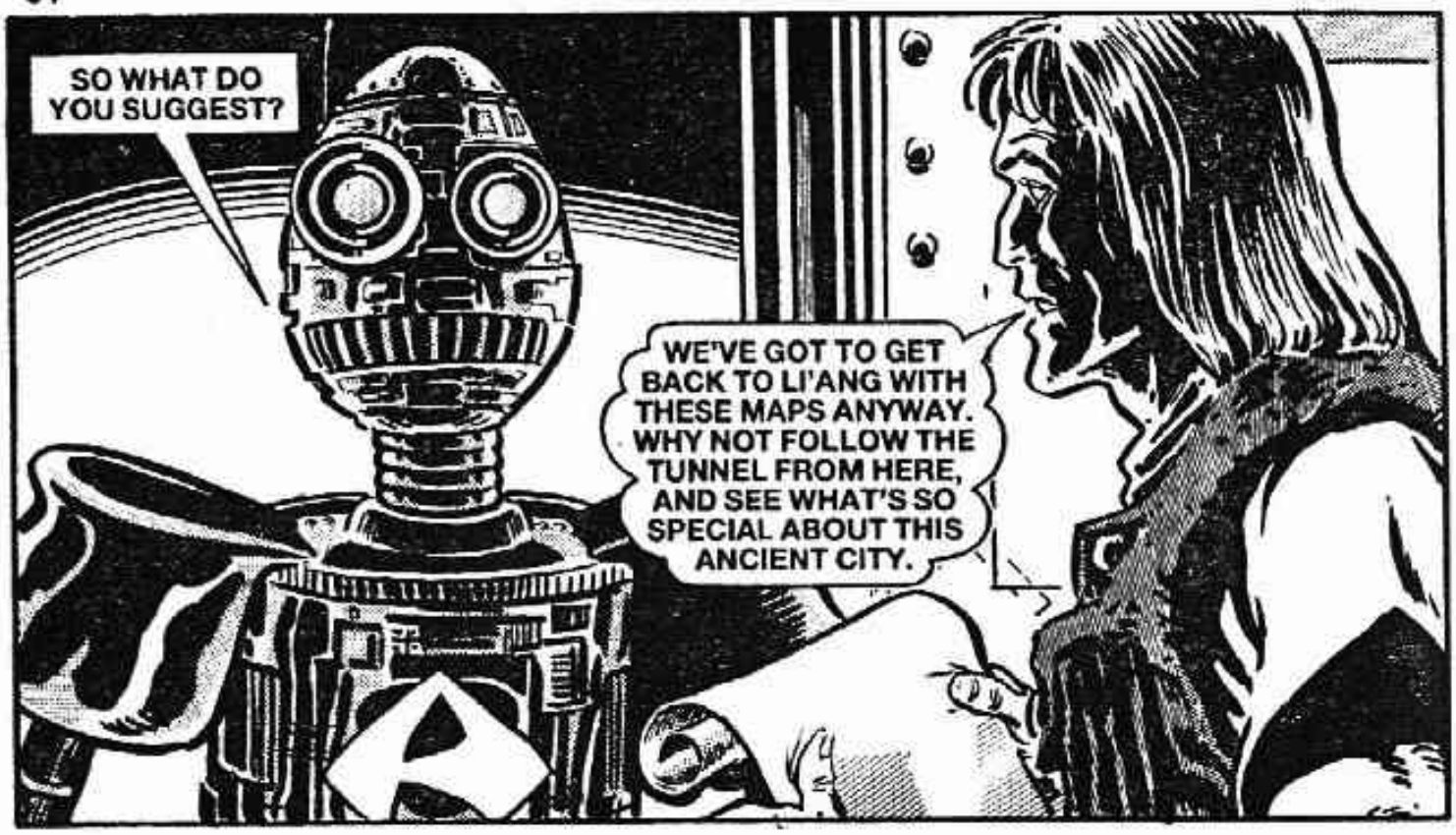
MUCH GOING ON ON THIS PLANET — AND THIS BRANCH — THAT NEITHER KELSO NOR COMMONWEALTH KNOW ABOUT. I THINK WE SHOULD SEARCH THOROUGHLY FOR CLUES. YOU LOOK UP HERE, I GO DOWNSTAIRS.
YOU'RE NOT SUCH A VAPOUR-BRAIN AFTER ALL, ARE YOU?


DOWNSTAIRS, ALL WAS IN DARKNESS.
NOT LIKE THIS! WHY SHOULD LIGHTS BE OFF. UNLESS SOMETHING DOWN HERE NOT TO BE SEEN.
WHAT THAT OVER THERE? LOOK LIKE ASSEMBLY TRACK.
THE ROBOT FAILED TO HEAR OR SEE THE SHAPE LURKING BEHIND . . .

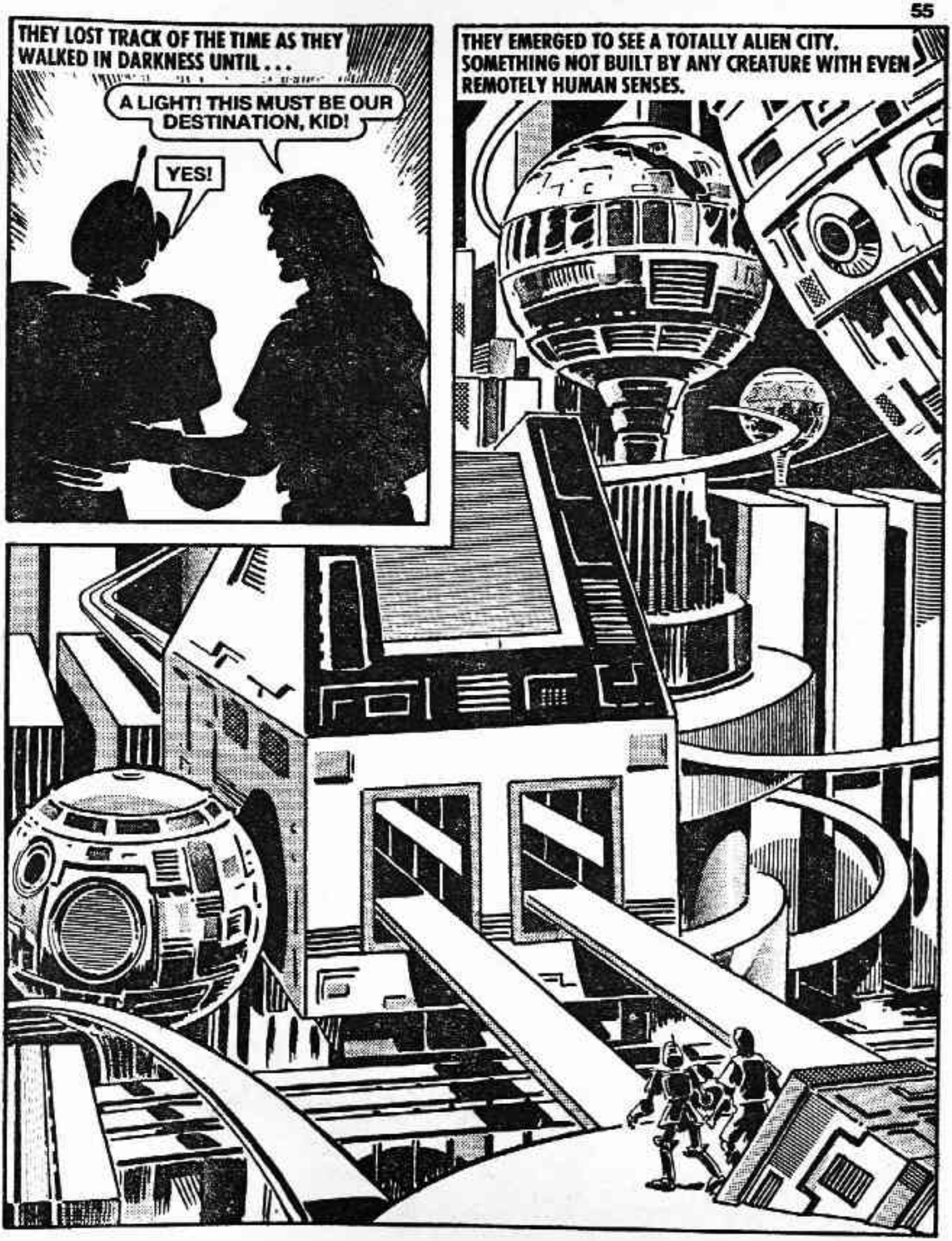

. . . UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE.
YEURGHH!

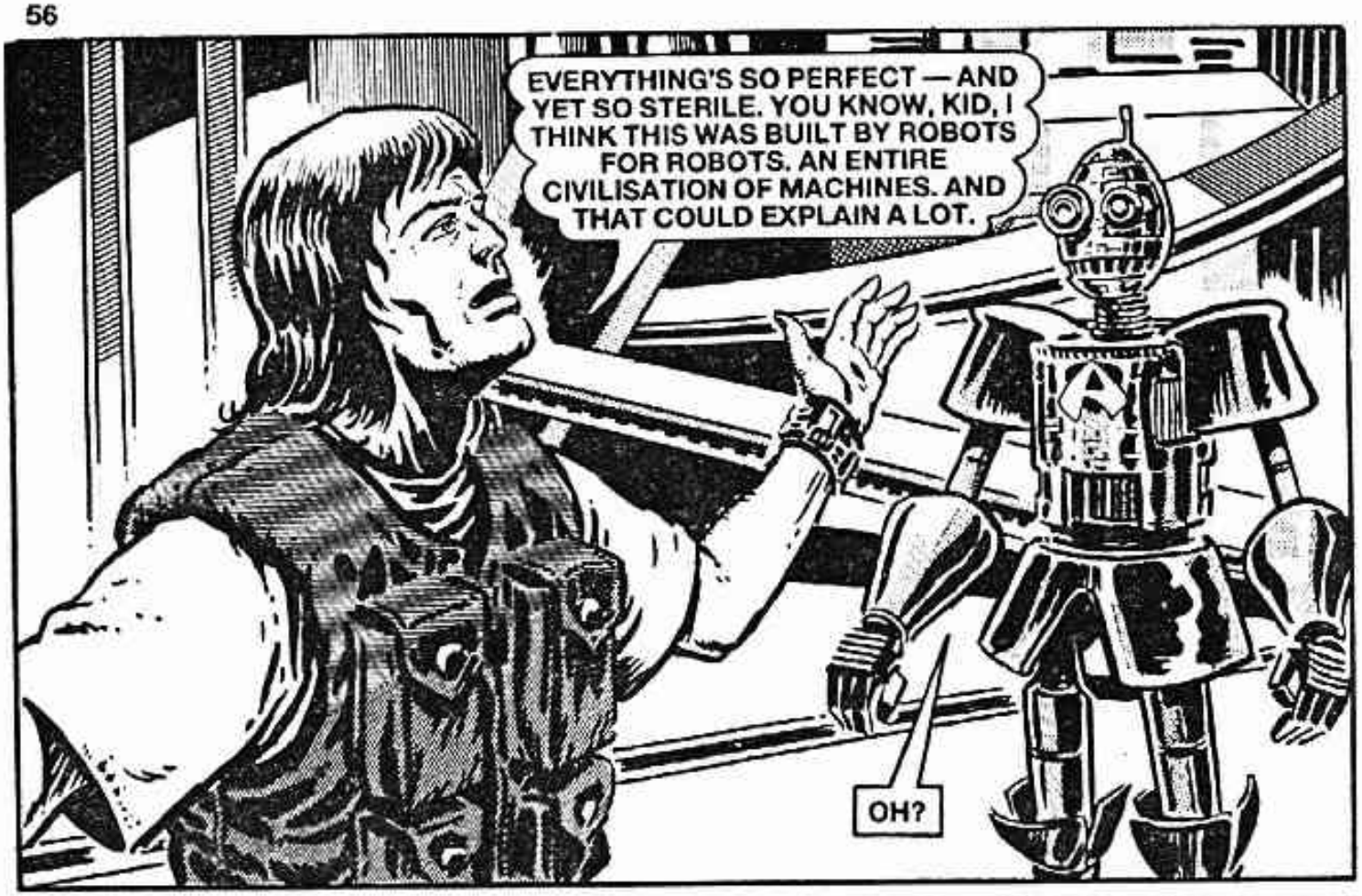
WHILE UPSTAIRS, FRANK MANCO HAD MADE A DISCOVERY.
NOTHING DOWN THERE.
BUT LOOK WHAT I'VE FOUND! PLANS OF SOME SORT OF UNDERGROUND CITY, AND INCREDIBLE DROID DESIGNS!

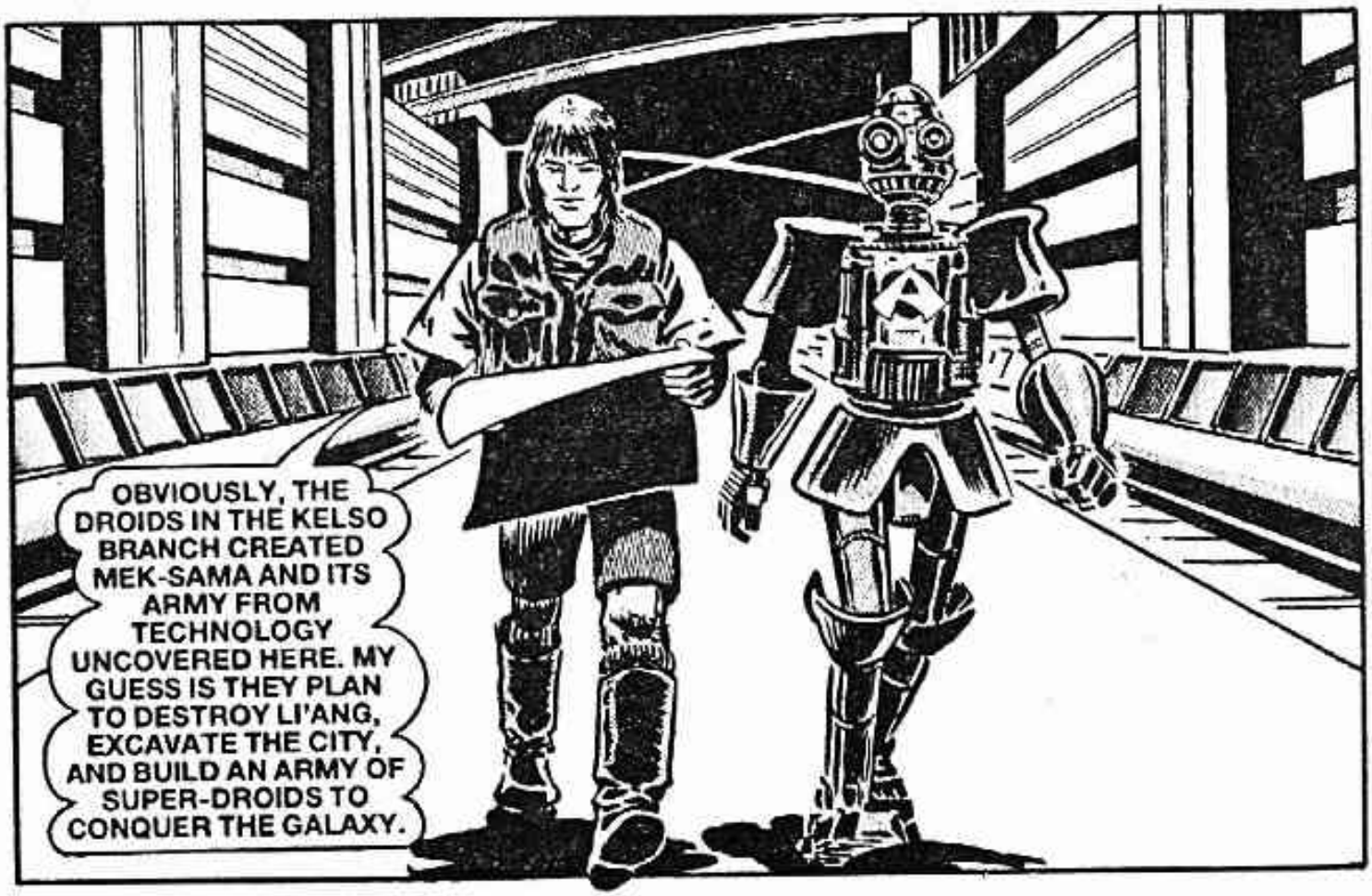

LI'ANG
I THINK I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE CONNECTION. THIS ANCIENT CITY LIES DIRECTLY BELOW LI'ANG. TUNNELS FROM HERE REACH IT, BUT IF THE VILLAGE ITSELF WAS DUG UP, IT WOULD BE FAR SIMPLER FOR WHOEVER'S RUNNING THIS OPERATION.


SO WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?
WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO LI'ANG WITH THESE MAPS ANYWAY. WHY NOT FOLLOW THE TUNNEL FROM HERE, AND SEE WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS ANCIENT CITY.

GATHERING UP THE PAPERS, THEY BEGAN DOWN A TUNNEL.
THIS ISN'T NATURAL! EVERYTHING'S TOO REGULAR, AND THE SURFACES ARE MACHINE-POLISHED.


THEY LOST TRACK OF THE TIME AS THEY WALKED IN DARKNESS UNTIL . . .
A LIGHT! THIS MUST BE OUR DESTINATION, KID!
YES!
THEY EMERGED TO SEE A TOTALLY ALIEN CITY. SOMETHING NOT BUILT BY ANY CREATURE WITH EVEN REMOTELY HUMAN SENSES.


EVERYTHING'S SO PERFECT — AND YET SO STERILE. YOU KNOW, KID, I THINK THIS WAS BUbuilt BY ROBOTS FOR ROBOTS. AN ENTIRE CIVILISATION OF MACHINES. AND THAT COULD EXPLAIN A LOT.
OH?


OBVIOUSLY, THE DROIDS IN THE KELSO BRANCH CREATED MEK-SAMA AND ITS ARMY FROM TECHNOLOGY UNCOVERED HERE. MY GUESS IS THEY PLAN TO DESTROY LI'ANG, EXCAVATE THE CITY, AND BUILD AN ARMY OF SUPER-DROIDS TO CONQUER THE GALAXY.

AFTER A BRIEF CLIMB, THEY EMERGED THROUGH A CAVE JUST ABOVE THE VILLAGE.
AH, LI'ANG. I CAN'T WAIT TO GET DOWN THERE!
YOU OKAY, KID? YOU SOUND DIFFERENT.

I AM FINE, FRANK MANCO. BUT I CAN NO LONGER SAY THE SAME FOR EITHER YOUR PRECIOUS ROBOT KID OR THE VILLAGERS BELOW.
CHOKING ON THE GAS, MANCO COLLAPSED TO THE GROUND.

THE IMPOSTOR STRODE INTO THE UNUSUALLY QUIET VILLAGE.
WHERE IS EVERYONE? COME ON OUT! IT'S ONLY ME!

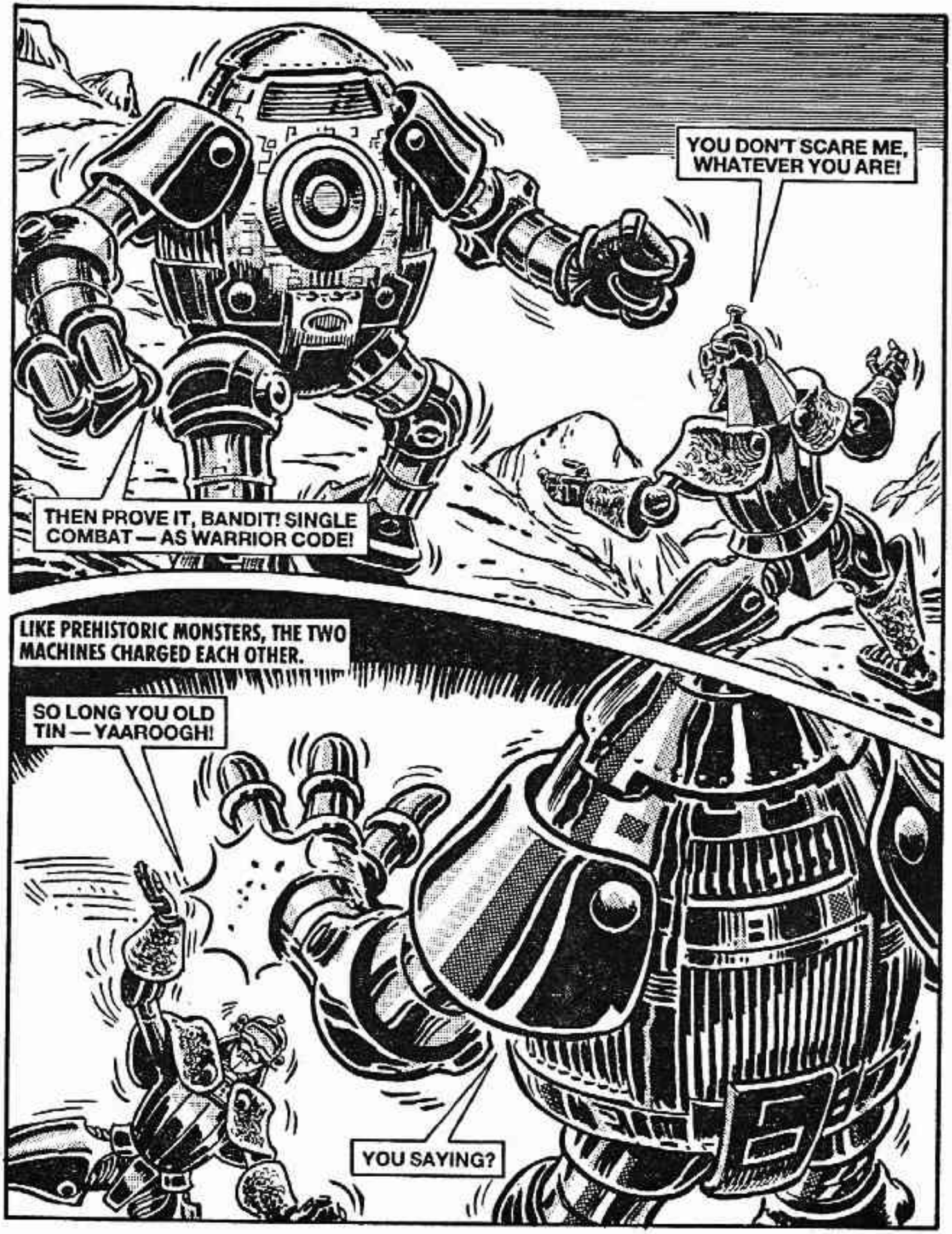
AND THEN A HULKING SHAPE BLOCKED THE WAY —
SO YOU STILL FUNCTION? WELL, ROBOT KID, THIS TIME I INTEND TO DISMANTLE YOU CIRCUIT BY CIRCUIT!
NO! NO! HOLD IT! THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE! YOU DON'T KNOW THE PLAN.
MY PLAN IS TO BEAT YOU TO A PULP!
LISTEN! KLAATU BA — URGHH!
A POWERFUL KICK SENT THE IMPOSTOR CRASHING TO THE GROUND.

GOODBYE, ROBOT KID. THIS TIME IT'S FINAL!
KLAATU BARADA NIKTO, YOU DUMMY! KLAATU BARADA NIKTO!

WITH A SINGLE WRENCH, MEK-SAMA TORE OFF THE IMPOSTOR'S HEAD.
KLAATU BARADA NIKTO? WHERE DID YOU LEARN THE PASSWORD?
BECAUSE I'M NOT — *FIZZLE* — THE ROBOT — SPARK? — KID, YOU CONDENSOR — *FIZZLE* — BRAIN!

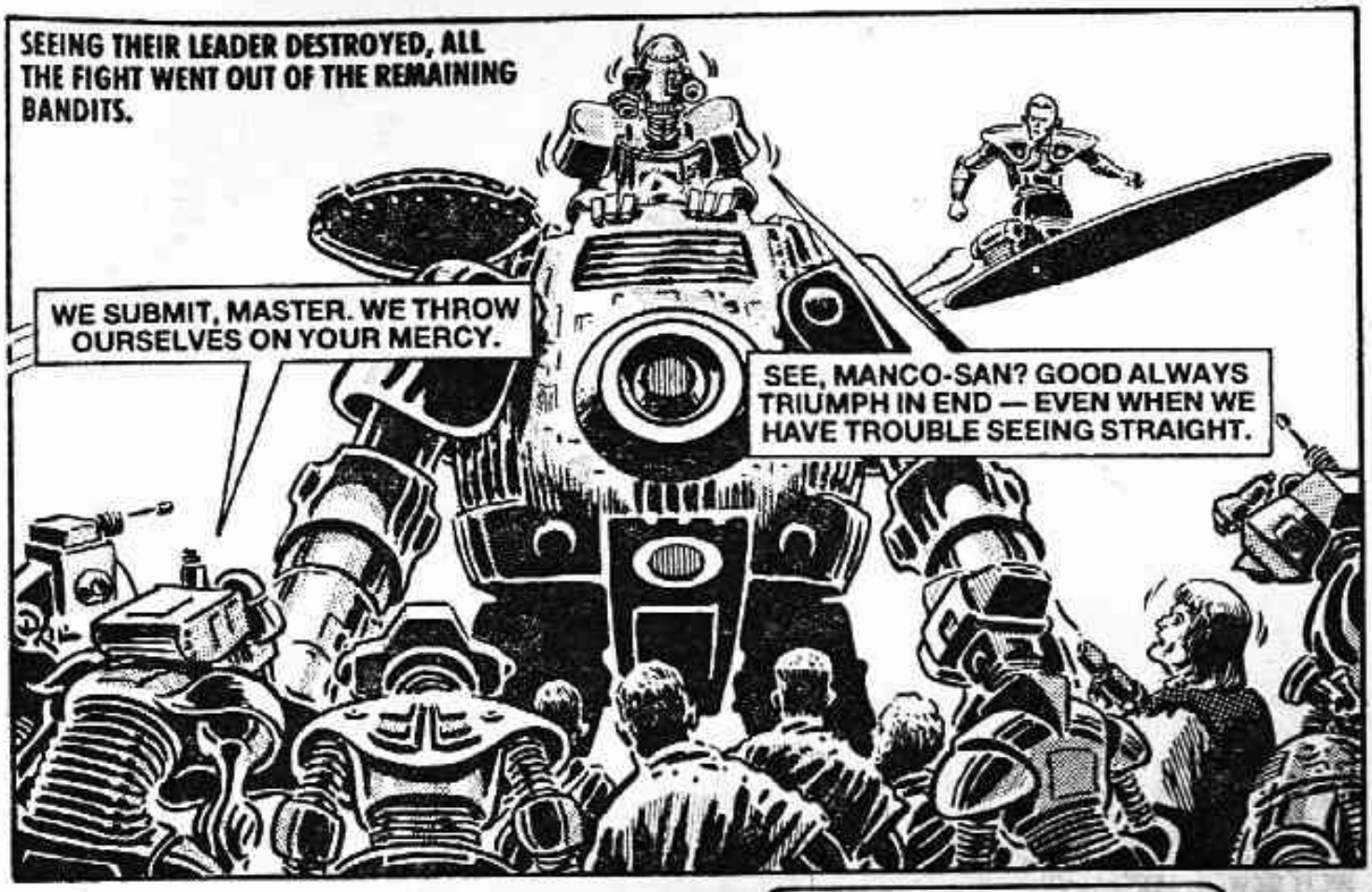
YOU'VE JUST PULVERISED ONE OF YOUR OWN CREATIONS, MEK-SAMA. AND PROBABLY THE LAST, NOW THE KELSO BRANCH IS A SHAMBLES, AND I'VE FIGURED YOUR LITTLE SCHEME OUT.
THE VIDEODROID'S KEEPER! ON THE CONTRARY, HUMAN, I KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THE ALIEN TECHNOLOGY TO CONTINUE THE WORK. I DON'T NEED ANY KELSO KILLDROIDS!
AT A SIGNAL FROM THE HUGE DROID, THE VILLAGERS OF LI'ANG WERE LED FROM THE HOUSES.
THEY WERE WAITING FOR US WHEN WE GOT BACK, FRANK MANCO. I'M SORRY.
ORIGINALLY, WE HAD PLANNED TO SCARE THESE HUMANS FROM THE VILLAGE! BUT NOW I THINK THIS WHOLE VILLAGE WILL BE DESTROYED WHEN MY BANDITS BLOW THE ROOF OFF THE CAVERN BELOW. NATURALLY — YOU WILL STILL ALL BE AT HOME WHEN IT HAPPENS.

BUT THEN THE GROUND SHOOK VIOLENTLY, AN OMINOUS RUMBLE THROBBED FAR BELOW THEM.
EARTHQUAKE!
SOUNDS MORE LIKE AN EXPLOSION TO ME!
ABOVE THEM, AN AWESOME SIGHT BROKE FROM THE TUNNEL LEADING TO THE CITY.
MEK-SAMA! YOU SO TOUGH — YOU FIGHT ME, EH?

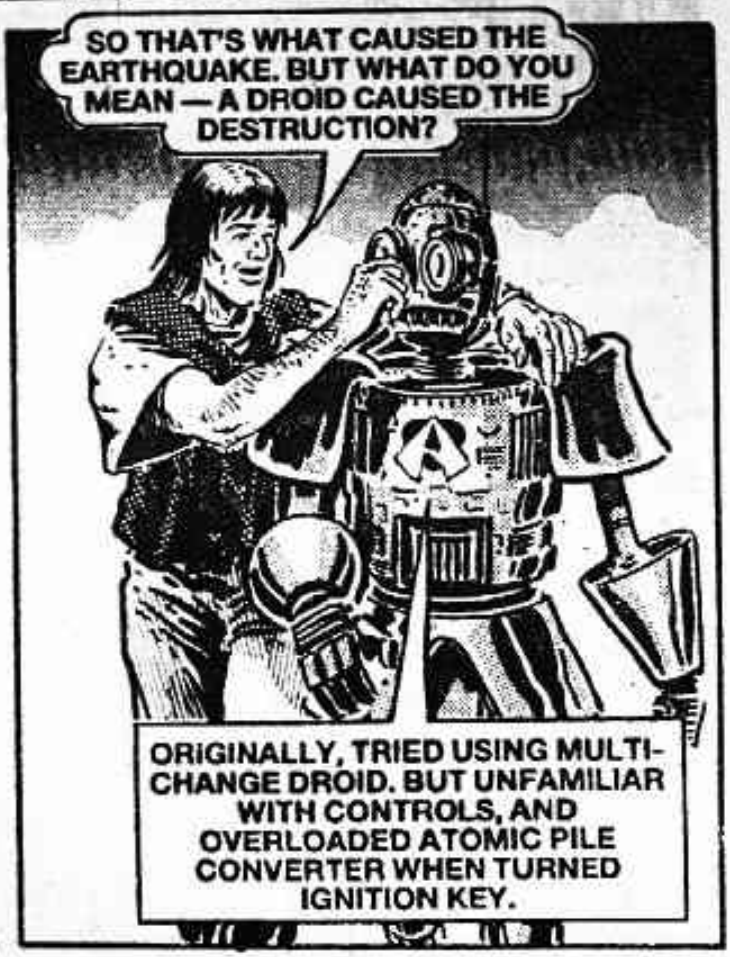

YOU DON'T SCARE ME, WHATEVER YOU ARE!
THEN PROVE IT, BANDIT! SINGLE COMBAT — AS WARRIOR CODE!
LIKE PREHISTORIC MONSTERS, THE TWO MACHINES CHARGED EACH OTHER.
SO LONG YOU OLD TIN — YAAROOGH!
YOU SAYING?

AS THE BANDITS' ATTENTIONS WERE DIVIDED, THEIR CAPTIVES TOOK FULL ADVANTAGE.
LET'S GO, MAN! WE'LL SHOW THESE SQUARES HOW TO DO THE BOOGALOO!
OO-ER! THAT TICKLES!
AS THE TWO GIANTS FOUGHT IT OUT, THEY FAILED TO NOTICE THE WIDENING CRACKS AT THEIR FEET.

THE GROUND FELL AWAY BENEATH THE HUGE DROID LEAVING IT VULNERABLE.
HEY! WHO STOLE GROUND?
THAT'S IT, BIG BOY! SAY GOODNIGHT!
BUT BEFORE THE BANDIT COULD MOVE, A DEEP PIT OPENED AT ITS FEET, AND MEK-SAMA TUMBLED TO A FIERY DOOM.
YAAA . . .!
GOODNIGHT, MEK-SAMA.


SEEING THEIR LEADER DESTROYED, ALL THE FIGHT WENT OUT OF THE REMAINING BANDITS.
WE SUBMIT, MASTER. WE THROW OURSELVES ON YOUR MERCY.
SEE, MANCO-SAN? GOOD ALWAYS TRIUMPH IN END — EVEN WHEN WE HAVE TROUBLE SEEING STRAIGHT.

WHERE'D YOU FIND THAT THING!
IN CITY. WHOLE GARAGE FULL OF THEM. EVEN ONE HUGE THING ABLE TO CHANGE INTO ANYTHING. FLYER, TANK. THAT WHAT CAUSE DESTRUCTION OF CITY.


SO THAT'S WHAT CAUSED THE EARTHQUAKE. BUT WHAT DO YOU MEAN — A DROID CAUSED THE DESTRUCTION?
ORIGINALLY, TRIED USING MULTI-CHANGE DROID. BUT UNFAMILIAR WITH CONTROLS, AND OVERLOADED ATOMIC PILE CONVERTER WHEN TURNED IGNITION KEY.

Printed and Published in Great Britain by D. C. THOMSON & CO., LTD.,
185 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2HS. © D. C. THOMSON & CO., LTD., 1989.

DON'T MISS

THIS MONTH'S OTHER ACTION-PACKED ADVENTURE

NOW ON SALE

RETURN OF THE ROBOT KID

The isolated agricultural village of Li'ang was plagued by bandits — robot bandits. The only way to deal with robot bandits was to hire a robot troubleshooter. And it just so happened that the famous Robot Kid was in town looking for work. Armed only with the flashing fists and flailing feet of his newly acquired martial arts mode, Robot Kid set out to help — assisted by a malfunctioning waiter droid and Sandy, the spaced-out surfing droid. So . . . there were only three of them — and no one could call them magnificent!